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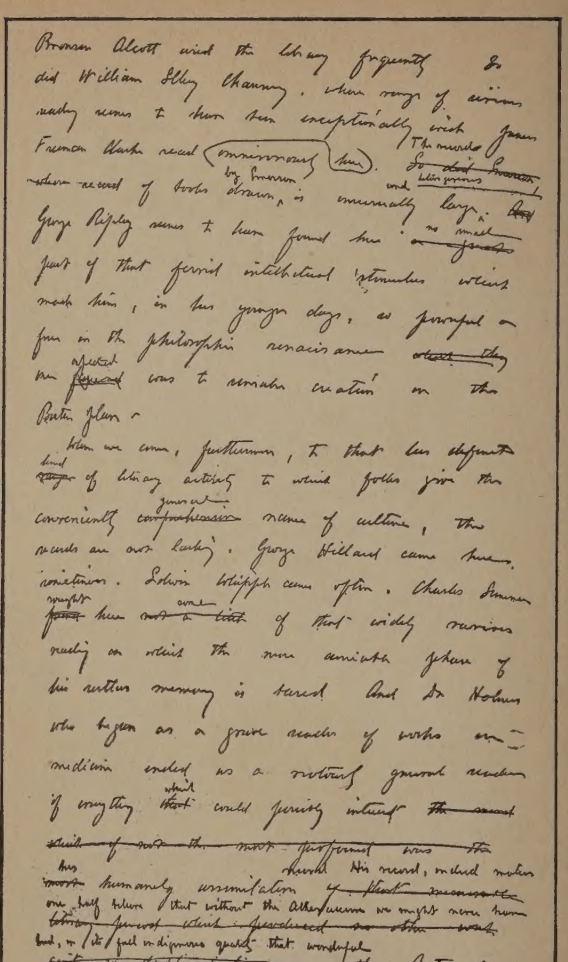

FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION, SHOWING REVISIONS, OF A PORTION OF PROFESSOR BARRETT WENDELL'S MANUSCRIPT OF "THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATHENÆUM." (*See pages vii–ix*)

ATLANTIC CLASSICS

FACT, FANCY AND OPINION

EXAMPLES OF PRESENT-DAY WRITING

EDITED BY

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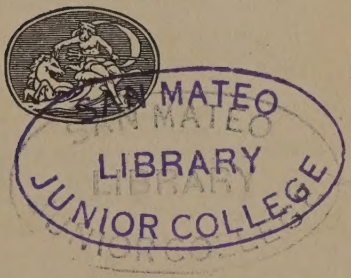
Writing through Reading



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Bronson Alcott used the library frequently. So did William Ellery Channing, whose range of serious reading seems to have been exceptionally wide. James Freeman Clarke read omnivorously here. ~~So did Emerson,~~ The record by Emerson and heterogeneous ~~whose record~~ of books drawn is unusually large ~~and~~ no small George Ripley seems to have found here ~~a great~~ part of that fervid intellectual stimulus which made him, in his younger days, so powerful a force in the philosophic renaissance ~~which they~~ expected once ~~fancied~~ was to remake creation on the Boston plan.

When we come, furthermore, to that less definite ~~range~~ kind of literary activity to which folks give the general conveniently ~~comprehensive~~ name of culture, the records are not lacking. George Hillard came here sometimes. Edwin Whipple came often. Charles Summer sought some ~~found~~ here ~~not a little~~ of that widely various reading on which the more amiable phase of his restless memory is based. And Dr. Holmes, who began as a grave reader of works on medicine, ended as a riotously general reader which of everything ~~that~~ could possibly interest ~~the mind~~ ~~which if not the most profound was the~~ his mind. His record, indeed, makes ~~most~~ humanely assimilative ~~of that memorable~~ one half believe that without the Athenæum we might never have ~~literary period which produced no other work~~ had, in its full indigenous quality, that wonderful ~~quite so deeply indigenous as the~~ Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.

We

TYPEWRITTEN TRANSCRIPT OF A PORTION OF PROFESSOR BARRETT WENDELL'S MANUSCRIPT OF "THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATHENÆUM." (*See Frontispiece and pages viii–ix*)

THE Frontispiece is a facsimile reprint of the original manuscript of Barrett Wendell's essay, "The Influence of the Athenæum on Literature in America," showing the author's corrections. The essay was printed in *The Athenæum Centenary: The Influence and History of the Boston Athenæum from 1807 to 1907*, published by the Boston Athenæum, 1907. The manuscript is preserved in the Library and the page is reproduced by permission of Mr. Charles K. Bolton, the librarian.

The text as finally printed is given opposite. It shows still further revisions.

Both the manuscript and the printed text are interesting as a study of how a practised writer perfects his expression on paper. Some of the changes are highly instructive.

Bronson Alcott used the library frequently. So did William Ellery Channing, whose range of serious reading seems to have been exceptionally wide. James Freeman Clarke read here omnivorously. The record of books drawn by Emerson is unusually large and heterogeneous. And George Ripley seems to have found here no small part of that fervid intellectual stimulus which made him, in his younger days, so powerful a force in the philosophic renaissance once expected to remake creation on the Boston plan.

When we come, furthermore, to that less definite kind of literary activity conveniently called culture, the records are not lacking. George Hillard came here sometimes. Edwin Whipple came often. Charles Sumner sought here some of that widely various reading on which the more amiable phase of his restless memory is based. And Dr. Holmes, who began as a grave reader of works on medicine, ended as a riotously general reader of everything which could possibly interest his humanely assimilative mind; his record, indeed, makes one believe that without the Athenæum we might never have had, in its full luxuriance, that wonderful Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.

(*Final Revision of the Facsimile Reprint. See Frontispiece*)

PREFACE

THE present collection has grown out of the desultory reading of two years, and has been gathered somewhat on Captain Cuttle's principle, "When found, make note of." My main purpose has been to collect from contemporary magazines and newspapers a large number of short essays, informal and personal in style, on as wide a range of topics as possible, keeping in mind the interests of students, and paying less attention to famous names than to readable subject-matter.

My reason for undertaking the task was my conviction that a book of examples of present-day writing on topics of permanent interest might be of service to supplement the more academic type of essays usually read by classes in composition. The accepted classics do not as a rule offer a reasonable standard for the student's emulation, because they have almost always been of slow growth and because they represent the ripest fruit of genius, both in thought and style. Mr. Strunsky has somewhere a sarcastic remark about the unreasonableness of asking a student to write an essay on the college gymnasium in the style of the Gettysburg Address; and most teachers come eventually to realize that, under average conditions of theme-writing, they have sufficient grounds for thanksgiving if their students as a group can write as well as the hurried author of an editorial in a metropolitan daily.

Why not then, I thought, collect some editorials and short essays on subjects conceivably within the student's experience or comprehension, and written in styles which he might hopefully emulate? With such a book in his hands, he not only would have a volume rich in suggestions for his own writing, but would have a wide variety of standards or gauges by which to measure his own practice. Instead of a series of impeccable models by authors whose very names fill him with awe, he would have a collection of examples of how professional authors are writing to-day under conditions of time and stress not wholly unlike his own.

That is the theory on which I proceeded; and it indicates clearly that I had in mind, not so much a book to study for the thought, as one to read for suggestions on practical matters of composition. I later added to my original plan several "features,"

such as a selection of student essays, a group of short book-reviews, and considerable apparatus: an Introduction, — dealing, I hope, in a not too conventional way with some problems of writing, — a body of Notes and Comments, and two long lists, one of Essay Subjects and the other of Recent Books of Essays. In the Notes and Comments I have mentioned a large number of books by living authors, hoping that with the list just mentioned, such references might stimulate students to read less fiction and more of those lighter essays that form a natural stepping-stone to the serious literature of the present.

The contents I have arranged under general heads, rather than according to any rhetorical plan, because I wished the user to read the book first of all for pleasure. Having read it through once, he can return under the instructor's guidance to those parts which may help him in his written assignments. He will find that there are few types of assignment that are not somewhere represented.

I restricted my choice almost entirely to present-day periodicals, for two reasons: first, because by doing so I could best propitiate the student who has become afraid of classic models and famous names; and, second, because by doing so I could differentiate my book from the others in the Atlantic Classics Series. *Fact, Fancy, and Opinion* is not an anthology of best essays, like the *Atlantic Classics*, or a collection of intimately personal essays, like *Essays and Essay-Writing*, or a series of formal essays on great subjects, like *Youth and the New World* and parts of *The Voice of Science in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. I have interpreted the word "essay" so loosely as to include any short piece of prose which is not purely narrative or descriptive in intention, preferring those that express a personal reaction to a subject, big or little. Some of the selections will reward close study and discussion of the thought, some of the style, but many are included merely because they are interesting, stimulating, or amusing, and therefore likely to provide the reader with valuable hints for his own composition.

A perusal of the contents will suggest to the instructor many uses to which they can be put. He may decide to begin written work with the short editorial (300 to 500 words), continue with the compiled essay, and proceed with the essay of fact and reminiscence, the essay of opinion or discussion, and so on to the most personal and familiar, which may be called the essay of fancy, ending with the book review. Or he may prefer to use the

book as a storehouse of examples from which to illustrate the various principles, methods, and devices that rise in the general study of composition.

I must express here in general my gratitude to the authors, editors, and publishers who have generously granted me the use of selected material. My indebtedness for each item is recorded under the separate titles in the Notes and Comments. I wish finally to thank the editors of the *Living Age*, — for, without knowing it, they have helped me to many discoveries in English periodicals, — and Mr. Charles Swain Thomas, the general editor of this Series, because of his constant interest in my plan and his suggestions for improving it.

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FACT, FANCY, AND OPINION

To express oneself personally is the way of sincerity; it is also the way of distinction. If I describe a scene just as everybody else describes it, I shall hardly be sincere — unless I was so unfortunate as to see only what everybody saw — and I shall certainly be dull. What makes a writer interesting is usually some expression of himself. It is oftener this than any novelty of experience. . . . An incident may seem significant or insignificant according to the way in which it is expressed. Some people will so describe marketing, or a railway journey, or laborers in a ditch, as to hold attention and awaken feeling. . . . Can the rest of us learn their art? Most people cannot be original in speech, because they do not really wish to express themselves. Most people are content to talk like their neighbors. They do not covet distinction. But some can. Indeed, it might be said with little exaggeration that all can who will. — CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN.

INTRODUCTION

I

Composition and Style. — In this Introduction I can touch on only a few of the problems of writing; and I shall have little to say, therefore, about composition in the older and restricted sense of structure and arrangement of parts. Composition in this sense you have doubtless already studied in the guise of formal exposition. My purpose here is rather to deal with style, as distinguished from composition: that is, with what we may call the general complexion or manner of writing. In composition we talk most about unity, coherence, and emphasis; in style, about clearness, vigor, ease, rhythm, restraint, and distinction.

Composition, whether of the whole product, or of the paragraph, or of the sentence, can be taught, to some extent at least, by rule, precept, advice, and criticism. It is largely a rational or common-sense matter, as Huxley indicated when he said that any person of average intelligence, application, and industry can learn to write exposition. But style, because it is mostly an affair of feeling, taste, and discretion, and therefore of experience, is not so easily taught or learned.

In the older day, the teaching of writing restricted itself largely to style; to-day it is likely to restrict itself as largely to composition. But there can be no doubt, I think, that overemphasis in either direction is a mistake. Along with the study of formal exposition, in which the emphasis is on composition, should go the study of informal writing, in which the emphasis is on style.

Writing through reading. — To provide you with some

suggestions for the study and practice of informal or personal writing is the purpose of this book, in general; but I wish in the Introduction also to provide you with materials for class discussion of some of the main problems that confront the student and practitioner.

You are not to look upon what I say as dogmatic. No one can safely be oracular about an art or craft. It will make little difference whether you and your instructor agree with everything that I say, if what I say leads you to think seriously about writing as an art and to discuss it and speculate about it.

Writing as conduct. — Writing, we too often forget, is simply a form of conduct, a way of living. There are three main ways by which we learn to live a good life: by living, by watching other people live, and by following rule, precept, and advice. The results of these kinds of experience are expressed in our conduct, which may be described as made up of morals and manners.

Morals and manners. — It is the elementary morality of a writer, as writer, to write lucidly, correctly, and concisely; and if he does so, his writing is so far good. But conduct, whether in writing or in society, includes not only morals but manners; and just as in society one must acquire the latter to be socially competent, so in writing one must add to clearness, correctness, and conciseness other qualities, such as vigor, ease, restraint, and detachment, all of which are usually summed up in some such word as "manner" or "style." Every writer, in fact, has manner or style, whether he knows it or not, and the question is not whether he has it but whether what he has is good.

In society. — To illustrate: We learned to "behave mannerly at table" by practising the delicate manual of knife, fork, and spoon, by watching those who had already mastered this difficult art, and by following advice, usu-

ally all too freely given. But if we had never learned, we should still have table manners, though they might be too awful to contemplate. The sale of handbooks of etiquette suggests that there must be many people who, having missed the first two sources of knowledge, have recourse to the third. But he is not a happy person who has acquired all his knowledge by the third method, because, though he may do well enough by rule and rote to pass muster in polite society, he has missed the particular experience that best gives ease and poise. He has never learned by example. We all know people, too, who never seem able to master even so trivial an art as table manners, though they have had plenty of opportunities to learn by example. They are, as we say, not observing; and we know that their lack of observation does not excuse them. What they have not learned unconsciously by imitation it is their duty to learn consciously by imitation or emulation.

In composition. — The analogy with writing is almost perfect. We learn this noble art in three ways: by writing; by reading what others have written, and hearing others speak; and by following rule, precept, and advice. All three ways are good, and even necessary, but the second, though much neglected, is the best. A cub reporter is told by his city editor to sit down and read newspapers, and read and read and read; and from such reading he is expected to gain perceptions of method and style. He discovers what a reporter may and may not do, and how he should do what he may do. He has been reading newspapers for years, and yet the years may not have taught him so much about his new work as a week of conscious and intense application teaches him. The reason is obviously that his past reading has not had practice in view at all, while his present reading has almost nothing else.

Writing and reading. — We do not always realize that mere reading may not affect our writing noticeably.

Those who read most are not inevitably the best writers, and those who read very little may write excellently. The truth is that if reading is to affect writing immediately, it must be reading that has writing in mind: that is pursued with definitely technical purposes in view.

From everything you read you can learn something about writing, but to do so you must cultivate a seeing eye; you must concern yourself not only with ends but with means; you must be interested not only in the What but in the How. No way of learning to write has ever been invented that is quite so good as the constant and year-long reading of the greatest books; for by this means one acquires a good style unconsciously. It is possible, however, to hasten the process of learning, just as the cub reporter does, by concentrating for a time on method.

II

The question of manner. — Before I go on to discuss practice, I must try to be explicit on the difficult subject of "manner." It is a truism that the best manner in society is that which attracts no attention to itself — that which is so finished that we never think of it at all. We know well enough that such a manner cannot be assumed, or, rather, that if it is assumed, it cannot deceive us for long. And, in general, in art that manner is best which is most simple and natural, because it is the manner that attracts least attention. It is a mistake to suppose, however, that a simple and natural manner, whether in society or in art, is necessarily easy to acquire. Some few fortunate persons may never consciously acquire it at all and yet have it; but most of us, especially in our youth, find that "it is so hard to be simple, so unnatural to be natural." It takes us a long time to discover the truth of the old Roman motto: *Ars est celare artem* — Art consists in concealing art.

Style. — When I speak of style, or manner, I am not thinking of anything "stylistic" or "mannered" — that is, either affected or labored. I am thinking merely of that which is lucid, on the one hand, and readable, on the other. "It cannot be said too emphatically that style, in its best sense, is part of the economy of utterance, not part of its extravagance. Style is the feather in the arrow, not the feather in the hat. It is never irrelevant or removable, for it is the result of the artist's efforts to say something, not prettily, or showily, or grandly, but clearly, completely, decisively. Neither in art nor in dress does style imply adornment. A coster, proud of his bedizened bride's turnout, once boasted that you could n't get another half-crown's worth on her anywhere. That is what seems to pass with many people for style. It is not style; it is something horribly unlike style: it is merely stylish."[1]

Lucidity and readableness. — I said "lucid" *and* "readable", not because the two qualities can be separated in ordinary writing, but because students hear so much about lucidity, or clearness, that they are likely to forget that they are under any obligation to be readable. The author whom I have just quoted puts very clearly the twofold duty: "If style," he says, "arises from the exact and economical adjustment of means and ends, of effort and effect, it may be urged, on the one hand, that Euclid offers us an excellent example of style in prose. He does. It is impossible to express more effectively such matter as Euclid has to express; and he would be delightful reading, if only he were readable. On the other hand, it may be urged that many charming, but somewhat extravagant writers disprove the claim that style is part of the economy of utterance. What about Lamb, for instance, whose delightful manner seems to arise rather from excess than

[1] "On Playing the Sedulous Ape," by George Sampson, in *Essays and Studies, by Members of the English Association*, Vol. VI, Oxford, 1920.

from economy? Style (in the finer sense) is always precarious where a personal manner is very pronounced; but we need have no doubt about Lamb. The purpose of any utterance is, of course, a factor in its form. Lamb does not write to propagate useful knowledge about chimney-sweepers or the Society of Friends. These things were his excuse, not his theme. He was a composer of fantasias; his genius led him toward a humorous extravagance of effect, and his art took the most economical means of obtaining it. For an example of extravagance without economy we can turn to *Euphues*, where we find, not a genuine idiosyncrasy, but the unnatural and calculated gesture that we call affectation." [1]

Style as effectiveness. — It will be well for you to divest your mind of any notion that manner or style is something that a writer puts on and off at will, as he might a costume, and for you to cling to the idea that style is, beyond simple lucidity, all that makes a piece of writing readable or interesting — or, as the popular term is nowadays, effective. When we speak of the style of a great author, we usually mean that quality or those qualities that make his writing distinctive or distinguished; but in a course in composition we use the term as a rule merely of the student's handling of words and sentences. If his handling of these is competent or adequate or relatively mature, we call his style good.

[1] Professor Sampson's views are those of "classical" critics in general, and of most rhetoricians. They are wholesome views for the young writer. Whether they are the whole story or not can best be determined by class discussion. Many essays on the subject of style are contained in *Theories of Style*, Edited by Lane Cooper; for style, rhetorically considered, see *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, by John Franklin Genung. Professor Genung's working definition of style is this: "Style is the manner of choosing and arranging words so as to produce determinate and intended effects in language." And he adds: "It is evident that the thought must be developed enough to contain some question of manner and effect before we associate style with it."

Professor Sampson says that when Keats first composed his *Endymion*, he wrote the famous first line as follows: —

A thing of beauty is a constant joy;

but it was not adequate to the conception he had in his mind, and he worked over it until it took its present form: —

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

Can we suppose for an instant that, if he had let the first version stand, it would ever have become one of the most quoted lines in English literature? Almost everything that we mean by style is implied in the change.

III

Tameness and stiffness. — You may have wondered why you fail to carry over into your writing the vigor and ease of your ordinary conversation. The probability is that when your work is criticized as stiff and formal, on the one hand, or as tame and colorless, on the other, you are in your writing simply not being fair to yourself. You have associated with the term "composition" ideas of the false-literary, the talking like a book, the assumption of an unreal dignity or owlishness. One often detects this tone in the letters of practical men who do not write much. Or you may have been so disturbed by the notion that you must be clear, correct, and concise and must diligently herd the "sacred cows of composition", — unity, coherence, and emphasis, — that your writing has lost all the native hue of resolution; all the joy has gone out of it; and it has become flaccid, pale, tame. All writing done without joy (or love, or hate, or pride, or other quality of earnestness) is like that. In your conversation you were not thinking of rules; you were enjoying yourself. In your writing you were miserable; and the misery shows just as plainly in the one as the joy in the other.

The cure: First step. — The best cure for your complaint is to write for a time just as you feel, just as you talk. Stop worrying about clearness and correctness, and specialize in freedom and readableness. When you talk, you are always trying to amuse, convince, persuade, instruct, or exchange ideas with somebody; do that in your writing. Divest your mind of the idea that all writing entails the assumption of a formal manner, as one puts on dress clothes for a ball or a banquet. Some writing does; but for ordinary purposes the best style is, as Hazlitt says, that which most nearly approaches the best conversation. Try for a time to write as you speak, even though you speak badly. By doing so, you will at least be sincere.

The cure: Second step. — Having shaken yourself loose from mechanical restrictions and divested your mind of all thought of rules and principles, you can now turn your attention to the education of your taste and judgment — the source of good manners, whether in writing or in society.

Essay-reading for colloquial ease. — All things considered, the best way to do this is to read the essayists. Of course, all great writers — the poets, historians, and scientists, as well as the essayists — will help you; but you are doubtless reading these in your literature courses, as well as voluntarily, for your character's sake. In connection with the practice of writing, however, nobody is quite so good as the essayists. In the first place, these men and women are nothing if they are not interesting. If they are flaccid, pale, and tame, they simply lose their jobs. "The first clause that the essay cannot afford to neglect is that it be entertaining, easy to read, pleasant to remember. It may preach, but it must never be a sermon; it may moralize, but it must never be too forbidding; it may be witty, high-spirited, effervescent as you like, but it must never be flippant or betray a mean spirit or a too

consciously clever pen."[1] In short, it "most nearly approaches the best conversation"; and *few of us nowadays ever hear the best conversation anywhere else.* In the second place, — and this is only a corollary of the first, — these writers offer the best examples, not necessarily of clearness, correctness, and economy, but of what may be called the secondary qualities, the manners, of good writing: ease, vigor, beauty, simplicity — in short, distinction. And in the third place, their diction is strongly idiomatic and colloquial.

Essay-reading for diction. — This last point is of the utmost importance to the young writer, because of the prevalence of jargon and slang, which are threatening the language with debility and debasement. It is entirely true that neologisms are especially live words, and that the lover of the language constantly seeks among them for new sources of expression; but it is equally true that the average student of to-day is incapable of exercising either taste or discretion in dealing with them. I constantly find that freshmen are unable, for example, to tell whether some idiom as old as the time of Chaucer is or is not slang.

It is an unrecognized axiom that the person who uses slang most effectively is not the one who knows nothing else, but the one who knows reputable English best.[2] To use slang with best effect, one must know that it is slang, and not suppose that it is Saxon idiom. The best essayists

[1] Ernest Rhys, in the Introduction to *A Century of English Essays.*

[2] Mr. Ade's slang is an instance in point, as is Mr. Lardner's "American." Both writers are in their degree masters of English who have used slang or illiterate American as an artistic medium. Ordinary folk are not Ades or Lardners.

Since writing the above, I was interested to find that Mr. Firkins makes precisely the same point regarding O. Henry's slang, in his essay on O. Henry. (It is accessible in Mr. Christopher Morley's *Modern Essays.*) The "connoisseurs of native flavors" will read Mr. Mencken's *The American Language* with delight; but most students need a preliminary course in John Bunyan.

and journalists are connoisseurs of native flavors in words. Like the poets, they are self-appointed conservators of idiom, which is the primitive bone and muscle of the language.

IV

Interestingness. — My next piece of advice is that, when you come upon anything that you find interesting, you should ask yourself why you find it so. You may say offhand that there is no mystery here; that a subject simply is interesting or is not. But a moment's thought will remind you that some people have the remarkable faculty of enlivening whatever they touch. This fact seems to prove that we are interested sometimes in subject matter on its own account and sometimes because of the way it is treated. The statement hardly needs to be argued, but some comment may prove instructive.

Interestingness due to earnestness. — When we ask how an author makes us attend to a subject about which we have cared nothing, we find that he first of all is interested in it himself, or gives that impression. Nothing is more contagious than earnestness or enthusiasm, when it is reflected in a style of vigor and animation. We respond to it emotionally, almost in spite of ourselves, perhaps feeling instinctively that there must be something in a subject about which the author is so earnest. At any rate, it is one of the powers of a good writer to infect us with his own faith in his subject.[1] It may be that he has artfully heightened his earnestness a little in order to catch our attention; for in much good writing there is an element of the dramatic or, rather, the histrionic. It is this which makes it "tell." But there must not be too much. This

[1] Tolstoi, in his *What Is Art?* has made "infection" the basis of his theory. — "An artist infects other people so that they share his feelings." Chap. I.

heightening of style in order to make it tell corresponds to that quality of acting which actors call "getting it over" to the audience. If you were acting in a drawing-room comedy, you would soon discover that you could not act and speak exactly as you would in a real drawing-room, but would have to increase your emotional pressure a little in order to get your impersonation over the wall of the footlights. You would have to be just a trifle more interesting or boring, moved or unmoved, glad or sad, than you would appear to be in real life. At the same time you would have to be careful not to overdo anything, because the moment your audience began to feel an exaggeration they would think your acting unreal or insincere.

Now young writers, like young actors, almost always either underact or overact. Usually, not realizing that there is just a shade of heightening in most of the literature which we call readable, or interesting, — as there is, probably, in all art, — they write so tamely as to be ineffective; and then, when told that their writing is tame, they fly to the other extreme of a forced style. No amount of advice and criticism can help them much to achieve that discretion, that happy mean, which is animated without being excited and earnest without being affected. Such discretion is the fruit of feeling as much as of intelligence, of taste as much as of judgment, and can scarcely be taught. It can, however, be acquired; and the best way of acquiring it is to read those authors who have it.

V

Interestingness due to devices. — The soundest method of arousing the interest of a reader is to be interested oneself. "If you would have me weep, you must first have wept yourself." But there are perfectly legitimate literary devices which professional authors use and which have not

been scorned by the greatest. Chief among these are, I imagine, the various methods of establishing one's theme at the very beginning in such a way that the reader's attention is caught and his suffrage won immediately. If you turn the leaves of this book, you will find that in essay after essay, editorial after editorial, the author has ingeniously introduced his subject in some novel way. One writer reports a bit of conversation ("Book Hunger"); another tells a parable ("Translating Literature into Life"); a third relates an incident ("Tops and Marbles"); and a dozen others refer to some item of the day's news. The number of such devices is almost without limit, and they are all good if used naturally and without ostentation. Much like them is the plan of beginning with a telling sentence, like Bierce's: "Nowhere on God's green earth," or the *Sun* editor's: "Is a pancake fried or baked, or simply cooked?" The principle is the good old one of: "Well begun is half done."

Interestingness due to concreteness. — But the two resources of an animated style and a good beginning do not exhaust an author's methods of arousing interest. Benjamin Franklin says that writing proceeds from the general to the particular or from the particular to the general; and a study of the essays will bear out his observation. On the whole, writing that proceeds from the general to the general puts a severe tax on the reader, and that which proceeds from the particular to the particular is likely to be without significance. Not only for the sake of clearness, but for the sake of readableness, the essayist, after making a general statement, gives one or more particular instances; for our minds cling desperately to the specific and concrete, to things of the senses, and cannot be happy for long among abstractions and generalities. Here is a fruitful field for study among the essays that follow. You will note how some begin with a specific case

and generalize from it; how others state the general idea first and follow with instances; and how still others proceed with a kind of wave motion, from general to particular, from general to particular, and so on to the end.

It is not necessary here to present a comprehensive study of the methods by which authors arouse and sustain the reader's interest; I have said enough to show that you can learn many of their secrets by careful attention to their writings. I wish now to suggest some ways in which you can incorporate your discoveries in your own composition.

VI

Vigor and Ease. — In the first place, many such discoveries need only to be rationally comprehended to be at once serviceable. The devices for making a good beginning or a good ending, the methods of exemplifying and illustrating and particularizing, — even such general matters as the use of reminiscence and personal experience, quotation, and anecdote; comparison and contrast; the adoption of a novel point of view; the indulgence of innocent prejudice or an unconventional attitude, — all these and many others need only to be detected in order to prove suggestive. But beyond these are other less definite and less purely rational methods which are still within the compass of the learner. Devices can be taught and learned, but these imponderables must rather be caught or apprehended, for they are more dependent upon feeling than upon reason, and upon taste than upon rational judgment.

Among these, or rather the qualities which they result in, we may count vigor and ease. College teachers complain that undergraduate writing, however formally correct it may be, is generally tame or stiff. I have touched upon these two faults above, and have suggested a first step toward their correction. I have advised you to stop

thinking about clearness and correctness, and to begin specializing for a while in readableness. Think mainly of what you have to say and how you shall say it interestingly; imagine a reader, try to address him with all the freedom and informality of conversation. But at the same time turn your attention to the improvement of your taste and judgment by reading essays.

Reading aloud. — Now I shall go a step further and advise you to read aloud. "Before all our elaborate machinery for teaching composition was invented and set up," says a college professor, "men and women wrote, on the whole, as well as we do if not better. How did they learn?" And he answers his question by saying that they read good books, and read them aloud, and heard them read aloud. They also "got by heart. We at best commit to memory — as to jail or perdition." Moreover, they translated, "and into English, too, not out of an ancient live language into a modern dead one." And, finally, "they imitated, consciously and unconsciously."

I shall return to this last method in a moment, but first let me speak further on the practice of reading aloud and of getting by heart — for the two go together. "I plead," says the same professor, "for a restoration of the practice of reading aloud in school and socially in the home. . . . For it is by the ear, not the eye, that the gift of utterance entereth in. I plead for learning good verse and prose by heart, till the constant ringing of such melodies and harmonies in the mind's ear awakens, purifies, energizes the spoken and written word."[1] And in the same vein, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, speaking of the effect of oral reading on writing, says: "I fear the gods will require of you . . . something of an ear. Yet the most of us have ears, of sorts; and I believe that, though we can only acquire it

[1] "Humanism and the Teaching of English," by Charles G. Osgood, of Princeton University, in the *English Journal*, March 1922.

by assiduous practice, the most of us can wonderfully improve our talent of the ear."[1]

Practical values of reading aloud. — Now practically, just what is the value of reading aloud and getting by heart, in the mastery of writing? Well, in the first place, the sound of the voice — our own or another's — powerfully reinforces the impressions made by the eye. If a piece of writing is easy, or vigorous, or musical, or rhythmical, or eloquent, that quality is enhanced for the mind by hearing it properly read. And in the second place, the mere fact that oral reading is slower and more expressive than silent reading makes us dwell upon manner, tone, or style as we should hardly do without it. And finally, oral reading more than silent reading attacks directly our emotions, our feelings, not merely through the ear, but quite literally through the muscles of most of the body above the waist.[2] It keys the feelings up or down, purifies and refines them, educates them in the direction of what our forefathers called taste.

I wish here, however, to make a particular point of the value of reading aloud what we ourselves have written. I do not find that many students ever think of doing this; but I am convinced that as a preliminary to revision there is no habit of more virtue. Authors have, time out of mind, been objects of satire because of their deplorable habit of reading their effusions to their friends, the assumption

[1] *On the Art of Writing*, p. 167. See, also, in general, his *On the Art of Reading*, and — a book to which the latter owes much — Hiram Corson's *The Aims of Literary Study*. Every student might read with profit, also, Corson's *The Voice and Spiritual Education*.

[2] These kinesthetic elements in oral reading have been strangely neglected in the teaching of writing, though some schools of psychologists have made much of them. The student can test kinesthesia very easily by trying to pronounce forcibly every consonant in the line: "We've scotched the snake, not killed it;" and by doing so will learn something, not only about reading, but about Shakespeare's purpose in writing so guttural a line.

being that their motive is always a desire to be complimented. And yet, while the habit may be a source of irritation, it is defensible on higher grounds than a hunger for approbation. Mere reading aloud helps the author, but reading aloud to an audience helps him even more, because it adds to the benefits already mentioned the lessons to be learned from the reaction of a hearer.

Emotional elements in composition. — I think that we shall never make much progress in acquiring the art of writing until we grant that, like every other art, *it is as much emotional as rational*, and therefore cannot be fully mastered by following rules, precepts, and advice. Good writing is the product as much of a cultivated taste as of a cultivated intelligence; and we can educate taste only by tasting, not by talking about it. Ten volumes on the flavors of various kinds and grades of tea might be of less value to a tea-taster than ten minutes' tasting of teas. If you would know what good writing tastes like, you must taste it, long and lingeringly, and roll it like a sweet morsel under the tongue. And such practices as reading aloud, memorizing, and even thoughtfully transcribing it, will help immensely to screw your taste to the sticking place. They will help you to discover that clarity is not all, but clarity with readableness; not ease, but ease with distinction; not vigor, but vigor with restraint; not beauty, but beauty with strength. These qualities usually have to be felt before they can be attained; for a critical sense precedes artistic accomplishment, always, though it may be unconscious. Fortunately, the qualities of good writing, like good manners, courage, and enthusiasm, are contagious.

VII

Imitation. — Among the practices by means of which our forefathers learned to write, Professor Osgood men-

tioned imitation. I cannot do better than quote in full the passage in which he declares his faith in it. "I plead," says he, "for frank and deliberate imitation. It will impair the originality of no one whose originality is worth saving. Rather it will encourage and stimulate powers now wholly undeveloped or partly so. The greatest have imitated, nor blushed to confess it, and have practised imitation as a means of developing their art.[1]

"After all, we learn nearly all we know by imitation. Though our whole vocation may not be endless imitation, most of it is, regret it as the poet may. Thus we learn to walk, and play, and work, and speak, and behave. Even in spiritual matters, we imitate — it may be, for the better. What do rules of correctness, enforced or at any rate inculcated with such pains, such repetition, such effort, and such nervous strain — what can all these avail against this overpowering human instinct of imitation, against the crudities of home and street and shop and movie and the live world at large? Imitation of the cruder English heard all abroad triumphs coarsely, arrogantly, over our best efforts of prescription. We can compete with it only by a subtle substitution of something better to imitate, and that through the ear."

Values of imitation. — At the beginning I advised you

[1] "After that Sunday afternoon" — in 1896 — "I read many poets (Chaucer, Keats, Shelley, Milton, and Shakespeare, more than others) and wrote many imitations of them." — John Masefield, in the Preface to *Collected Poems*, 1919. — "The person whose appreciation of the beauties of various prose is so keen that he must at once try to reproduce them in himself, will be one born with such an impulse toward writing that no imitation can harm him. On the other hand, imitation will scarcely injure the personality of those who have no personality to injure." — Professor Sampson, in "On Playing the Sedulous Ape." This essay is the best discussion of imitation I have seen. In it not only Stevenson's confessions are examined at length, but those of Samuel Butler, Newman, and Tolstoi.

I have discussed imitation, as well as translation, verse-writing, and other aids, more fully in *Writing through Reading* (Atlantic Monthly Press).

to write like yourself, and I may seem curiously inconsistent to advise you now to try to write like somebody else. And yet it is not really a paradox to say that you may learn to write more like yourself by trying, for a time, to write like somebody else. If the somebody else has ease and vigor, and you through emulation succeed in catching some echo of those admirable qualities in your own writing, you have merely extended your own capabilities. You have gained freedom to be more truly yourself by overcoming some part of your inarticulateness. "Virtue would not be virtue, could it be given by one fellow creature to another"; and we may be fairly sure that we shall not get anything of importance or permanence from another that we do not already possess in some measure ourselves.

Fear of imitation. — I have never been able to understand the curious fear which many people have of imitation. The great masters never felt this fear. Being usually self-taught, they instinctively seized upon imitation as a sensible and convenient method of learning. Many people who have never informed themselves on how the masters learned and who, perhaps, have never really learned themselves, object, nevertheless, to the practice, apparently in the belief that the learner who tries to write like another will immediately lose his own identity. And yet, as we have seen, we learn most of the manners and usages of polite society by this means without suffering so untoward a fate. Let us suppose that a boy set himself seriously the task of learning to write like Huxley or Newman, or Belloc or Nevinson — not a literary genius, but an average fellow, who merely wanted to be able to write good English; and suppose that by some miracle he succeeded in doing so. Would not his last state be better than his first? Would he not have acquired a style superior to any we can conceive of his acquiring if he had "tried to get there by hammering on his own untutored impulse," as "Q" puts it?

Practical values and dangers. — But practically, once more, how can you make of imitation a means of improving your written style? It is surely unnecessary to say, first of all, that you must choose good models. I do not think, however, that they need always be great. For the ordinary man, the chief danger of imitation is that it may lead him to adopt the worst features of his exemplar, rather than the best; and for this reason a great author, like Lamb or Carlyle, may be the worst of models. "Something," says Professor Sampson, "the ordinary man can lose, or fail to acquire, in a course of imitation, and in this lies the danger. We are not all likely to become authors, but most of us are required to make statements in writing. Now the virtue of all virtues in a statement is lucidity, and that is the quality most likely to suffer from conscious attempts to be literary. . . . When your natural impulse is toward not-writing, you may be an unsafe person to be loosed upon the niceties of prose. You may take as essentials what are accidents; you may feather your shaft so gorgeously that it will refuse to fly."

Practice of imitation. — These are the dangers, but they should not be exaggerated. You have an instructor to guide you in your choice of models, and in this book you will find safe models a-plenty. Here are some suggestions: The essay, "Book Hunger," is written in a curiously staccato style and in the historical present. Now that style is not a safe one to adopt as a permanent acquisition, and yet it is effective for some purposes. And it is a very easy style to imitate. All you have to do is to read the essay, preferably aloud, noticing how the author gets his effects, and then try to write in the same style yourself, on any appropriate subject. The exercise will increase your versatility. But you will not stop there. Suppose you next tried your hand at the equally energetic but more mature manner of Mr. Bennett in his essay on reading. You

would not find it very difficult, though it would be harder to do than the other. You might then attack the hammer-and-tongs rhetoric of Ambrose Bierce, and follow with an attempt at the quieter and finer vigor of Mr. Nevinson and the writer of "Ringing the Bells of Heaven." So much for practice in vigor. In the same way you can grade the essays characterized especially by ease, or even by such intangible qualities as humor and sentiment, and can successively imitate their styles. You will, of course, intersperse among your exercises of this kind essays in which you will think of nobody else at all. I believe you will find that by such exercises your facility and versatility will increase more rapidly than you had thought possible.

VIII

Loose facility. — But too facile writing is likely to have the worst qualities of all — looseness, superficiality, vagueness, or sheer windiness. A boy from Texas once observed to me that writing an essay consisted in cutting an idea out of the herd, roping, throwing, and hog-tying it, and putting your private brand on it to show that it was your own. A boy with such a conception of writing was at least not facile, for he obviously looked upon it as hard work. His writing was likely to be strained, something of a tour de force; but even that is better than the product of primitive feebleness that exudes thoughts — or words — as a rubber-tree sap, without any indication of a controlling will. There is perhaps no worse style than a merely facile style; and it is almost a misfortune for a person to write too easily, unless he happens to possess an unusually sensitive artistic conscience. The best way to guard against a merely loose facility is to determine that when you write you will really say something. It need not be profound or important or even particularly original, but it need not

be wordily expressed. Huxley announced that wordiness is the unpardonable sin of the writer, It deserves penance, and the most profitable penance is rigid revision.

Quiller-Couch quoted. — "The editor of a mining paper in Denver, U.S.A.," says Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "boldly the other day laid down this law, that niceties of language were mere frills; all a man needed was to 'get there,' that is, to say what he wished in his own way. But just here . . . lies the mischief. You will not get there by hammering away on your own untutored impulse. You must first be your own reader, chiseling out the thought definitely for yourself; and, after that, must carve out the intaglio yet more sharply and neatly, if you would impress its image upon the wax of other men's minds."

Samuel Butler quoted. — A much more important person than the Denver editor, — Samuel Butler, "*Erewhon*" Butler, — speaks as follows: "I never knew a writer yet who took the smallest pains with his style and was at the same time readable. . . . A man may, and ought to take a great deal of pains to write clearly, tersely, and euphemistically: he will write many a sentence three or four times over — to do much more than this is worse than not rewriting at all: he will be at great pains to see that he does not repeat himself, to arrange his matter in the way that shall best enable the reader to master it, to cut out superfluous words, and, even more, to eschew irrelevant matter: but in each case he will be thinking not of his own style but of his reader's convenience. Men like Newman and R. L. Stevenson seem to have taken pains to acquire what they called a style as a preliminary measure — as something that they had to form before their writings could be of value. I should like to put it on record that I never took the smallest pains with my style, have never thought about it, or whether it is not, as I believe and hope, just common simple straightforwardness. I cannot

conceive how any man can take thought for his style without loss to himself and his readers."

Butler's views examined. — Now so many people talk like this, even brag like this, that it is necessary for me to point out to you that such talk is specious. If you will read what Butler says, thoughtfully and with an open mind, you will perceive that he simply gives a bad meaning to the word "style," and then says that he cares nothing for style in that bad sense. And yet he at the same time says explicitly that he takes quite unusual care to write well, according to some ideal of style which he has in his mind, "just common, simple, straightforwardness." And his ideal is an excellent one. It made him one of the masters of prose. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that such an ideal is realized easily: indeed, he says quite clearly that he took "a great deal of pains" to realize it. "Only those," says Mr. A. R. Orage, in *Readers and Writers*, "who have aimed at writing with studied simplicity, studied lucidity, and studied detachment, realize the amount of feeling that has to be trained to run quietly in harness"; and the danger to the learner of such remarks as Butler's is that he will remember the phrase, "I never took the smallest pains with my style," and forget the phrase, "A man may, and ought, to take a great deal of pains." The inconsistency is explained quite simply by Butler's entirely praiseworthy dislike of "fine writing" and his quite arbitrary confusing of fine writing with style.

Professor Sampson amusingly lays bare the "disabling" fallacy by transposing it into other terms: "I have a great dislike for cleanness, and I feel sure that any one who troubles about cleanness at all is a suspicious character. For my own part, I bathe every morning and evening, I wash my hands and face every few hours, and I am properly attentive to my nails and ears and teeth; but I don't care a bit about cleanness, and I am quite indifferent

whether I am dirty or not." And he comments: "Butler writes as if it were legitimate for a writer to adopt means, but illegitimate for him to have an end; but the man who cares about the end, cleanness, and the man who cares about the means, washing, are both, so to speak, in the same bath; and the man who cares about the end, perfection, and the man who cares about the means, labor, are both in quest of style."

Ben Jonson quoted. — Now if you will keep in mind that we are concerned here — not with how a genius learns to write, but how an average student can learn, and that we are not concerned so much with the standing quarrel regarding the advantages or disadvantages of imitation as we are with the problem of the best expenditure of labor in order to learn, you will find that practically all authorities disagree with the Denver editor in that "all a man needs is to 'get there,' that is, to say what he wishes in his own way." Whether the authorities believe in imitation or not, they agree that easy writing is likely to be bad writing. "The sum of all is," says Ben Jonson, in *Timber*, "ready writing makes not good writing, but good writing brings on ready writing"; which reminds us of Sheridan's remark that "easy writing 's curst hard reading." "As it is fit," Jonson goes on to say, "that grown and able writers stand of themselves, and work with their own strength, to trust and endeavor by their own faculties, so it is fit for the beginner and learner to study others and the best. For the mind and memory are more sharply exercised in comprehending another man's things than our own; and such as accustom themselves and are familiar with the best authors shall ever and anon find somewhat of them in themselves; and in the expression of their minds, even when they feel it not, be able to utter something like theirs, which hath an authority above their own."

In another place he says: "No matter how slow the

style be at first, so it be labored and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words, that offer themselves to us; but judge of what we invent, and order what we approve. Repeat often what we have formerly written; which beside that it helps the consequence, and makes the juncture better, it quickens the heat of imagination, that often cools in the time of setting down, and gives it new strength, as if it grew lustier by the going back. . . . For all that we invent doth please us in the conception of birth, else we would never set it down. But the safest is to return to our judgment, and handle over again those things the easiness of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers in their beginnings; they imposed upon themselves care and industry; they did nothing rashly; they obtained first to write well, and then custom made it easy and a habit."[1]

IX

Specious catch phrases. — Such reflections as these suggest that you should be cautious about putting too much faith in certain catch phrases that are at present popular: such as "the way to learn to write is to write," and Dr. Johnson's dictum, "Have something to say, and the words

[1] Since it is not my desire to be dogmatic, I will set against this a quotation from Kingsley's *Alton Locke*. Sandy Mackaye (who is supposed to have been drawn from Carlyle), in a conversation with his young protege, Locke, says: "'Just mak' a gran', brode, simple Saxon style for yoursel'.' 'But,' asked Locke, 'How can I know what sort of a style it ought to be?' 'Oh!' replied Sandy, 'but yon's amazing like Tom Sheridan's answer to his father. "Tom," says the auld man, "I'm thinking ye maun tak' a wife." "Verra weel, father," says the puir skellum; "and wha's wife shall I tak'?" Wha's style shall I tak'? say all the callants the noo. Mak' a style as ye would mak' a wife, by marrying her a' to yoursel'; and ye'll na mair ken what's your style till it's made, than ye'll ken what your wife's like till she's been mony a year by your ingle.'" — Jonson and Sandy do not agree on the value of imitation, but they both insist that a style does not make itself.

will take care of themselves." Mere voluminous writing, if it is thoughtless and facile, may simply stamp upon us all sorts of faults, all manner of bad habits; and it is probable that we shall learn more about expression from a page carefully revised and rewritten three times, than from twenty cast off without forethought or afterthought. And the learned Doctor's advice is sound for a professional; but for a learner it may be merely vicious. He would be a crazy music-master or teacher of art who should say to a pupil, "Think of a tune or a picture, and the chords or colors will take care of themselves." And yet the Doctor's and the Denver editor's theory is very popular among "practical men" and scientists, and, because their influence is more powerful to-day than it ever was, it has constantly turned the study of composition into unprofitable channels. "We found," says Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "that even for the Men of Science the neat clean carving of words was a very necessary accomplishment. As Sir James Barrie once observed, 'The Man of Science appears to be the only man who has something to say, just now — and the only man who does not know how to say it.' " If this charge is fair, and it has been brought with special persistence against American men of science, the reason is to be sought in an entirely unscientific misconception of how we learn any art.

"Good writing is good thinking." — The truth is that we cannot dodge the difficulties of writing as a craft by means of catch phrases. If we say, for example, that good writing is merely good thinking, we announce what is a fact; but we have not helped the learner much. We have only moved his difficulties back a step without throwing any light upon them. Nobody ever thought that writing is identical with penmanship. If the student asks, "What, then, is good thinking?" we can only offer him a string of qualities which in their sum amount to this:

good thinking is the kind of thing that, written down, we call good writing. Terms that describe one describe the other; for, as Cardinal Newman said very beautifully, thought and expression are as intimately wedded as are the convex and the concave of a curve.

It is this great truth that persons often ignore who have never tried to write with "studied simplicity, studied lucidity, and studied detachment," and have therefore never realized "the amount of feeling that has to be trained to run quietly in harness." They do not see that ineffective writing is ineffective thinking, or that the technique of expression is the technique of thinking. It must be mastered. Whether it is mastered entirely in the head without the intervention of writing, or whether it is mastered by manipulating and refining words on paper is immaterial. The two processes are both composition. But a wise old essayist said that "writing maketh an exact man."

Easy composition but laborious correction. — Most students have no conception of what "manipulating and refining words on paper" means. A while ago a poem by Browning was advertised for sale (in manuscript), as the eleventh revision; and literary biography is full of similar examples of laboriousness. "All my poetry," says Robert Burns, "is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction" — a remarkable confession by a man whose verse, above almost all other verse, gives an impression of spontaneity.

Dislike of revision. — Students, when they are asked to revise or rewrite, almost invariably vote the exaction to be tiresome — as if that made any difference. They will do — they have to do — a problem in algebra or physics over and over until they have it right, and see no unreasonableness in being required to do so; but to write a sentence or a paragraph over and over until they have it right seems a waste of time. And yet one learns much

more about writing during laborious correction than during easy composition.

Working over this Introduction I have felt more than ever the hollowness of some of the pieces of advice that grown people are fond of giving beginners, such as "Know your subject," "Write out of a full mind," and "Write just as you think." It is often just because the mind is full of one's subject that the first easy composition needs the later laborious correction. For the full mind is always running off on tangents, lugging in nonessential stuff, expatiating windily, and suggesting immaterial footnotes and addenda. Nor is it any safer to write just as you think, for the mind is like a spirited horse, that will take the bit at any moment and go racing off 'cross-lots, to the detriment of all logic and all restraint.

X

The practice of correction. — Easy composition, but laborious correction. As a first step in correction, I suggest that you read over aloud what you have written, to see whether it is satisfying. When we use the adjective "satisfying" of a bit of writing, we are really saying, not only that it is entirely clear, but that it is rhythmical in the largest sense. The words are in the right places; there are just enough of them; the phrasing is skillful and well-ordered; and the end comes when we expect it. If the oral reading leaves you dissatisfied, try to determine where the fault lies. Is the effect tame or vague or spasmodic or angular or formal or bookish? Does your work as a whole or in any part seem overdone or underdone?

If your work does not satisfy you, what you will do next depends on your temperament. You may shrug your shoulders and say it will have to do — in which case you will have learned next to nothing; or you may throw it

into the wastebasket and try again; or you may revise it, line by line, word by word. The second method is heroic, but certainly the best. The third is that used by most professional authors.

Rewriting. — To destroy your first draught after you have studied it and to begin over again is best, because it does away with patching and mending. Time spent on the first draught is by no means wasted, as you will find when you come to write the second. I suggest, however, that between the two draughts you spend a while reading some passages in this book that seem nearest in point of style to the one you are trying to achieve. Read them aloud. If you prefer the third method of revision, you must pursue it thoroughly, weighing every word, every sentence, for clearness and vigor, and testing the whole for ease. Lazy or timid revision, while better than none, is still of small account.

During the first easy composition your mind should be occupied mostly with what you wish to say. During the subsequent laborious correction, it should be occupied mostly with how you have said it.

XI

Experimenting. — In this book I have gathered from present-day periodicals a large number of short essays on a wide variety of subjects and in many styles. From each of them you can learn something. If you can write as well as the author of the most modest editorial, that is at least something; but there are many essays that are better than you can write. From them you can derive suggestions for improving and enlivening your writing; and if you will experiment with methods, devices, and subjects, you will gain in facility and versatility. Your experiments may in general take three directions: (1) Having chosen a sub-

ject that interests you, you may read some of the essays that you like best and in your writing emulate those qualities that you lack or that please you; or (2) you may look through the book for devices for beginning, continuing, and ending, for illustrating, exemplifying, and enlivening your material, and for increasing interest, and may try your hand at them; or (3) you may in some carefully chosen instances conscientiously imitate.

The best plan. — All things considered, apart from literary exercises and rhetorical drill, I think that the best single plan for composition is this: (1) Think carefully about what you want to say and the best order and the best general manner of saying it; (2) write a first draft rapidly but as well as you can and without thinking too much of either rules or models; (3) turn to those essays in the book that are most like that which you are trying to write, and read them carefully, preferably aloud; and (4) finally, read your essay aloud and see how it now strikes you.

After you have submitted your work to your instructor for correction, criticism, and advice, you will either rewrite it or not, as he may advise; but I suggest that in case you are not asked to rewrite it, you nevertheless keep it for a month or a longer period, without looking at it. In every course in composition there ought to be included an occasional reworking of an essay written a long while ago. This exercise is almost always better than an immediate reworking, because, (1) as Ben Jonson says, "all that we invent doth please us in the conception of birth, else we would never set it down," but it is not so likely to please us after it has become cold; (2) we are not so subject to boredom in rewriting an essay a month or six months old as in revising one written yesterday; and (3) by deferring the reworking we are able very accurately to gauge whatever progress we may have made in the interval since the first writing.

In conclusion I must remind you that in this Introduction I have said very little about composition proper — that is, planning, outlining, selecting material, and arranging parts. That is mostly an affair of plain commonsense. But I will end with the general statement regarding it, that *the more time you spend in hard thinking before you write, the less time you will have to spend in writing.*

EARTH AND SEA

THE SHRINKAGE OF EARTH

HENRY WOOD NEVINSON

EVERYONE admires the skill and resource of those who have lately tried to fly from Cairo to the Cape. Five parties have made the attempt. Three failed before reaching Khartum; the "Times" crashed at Tabora near Tanganyika; "Silver Queen II" made Buluwayo, which sounds almost homelike now, and is only one thousand miles short of the goal, or about four-fifths of the total way. All failed in the end, but everyone admires the attempts. Everyone has followed the adventures with interest, and sympathized with the difficulties and disappointments — the accidents to machinery, the repeated leakages, the sickness, the whirlwinds, the thunderstorms, the dust-clouds, and above all the intolerable heat. Bush fires obscured the earth; the tropical haze concealed the Nile; dust-storms rose thousands of feet in air; the flyers were driven to land in wild regions where their direction was lost; they ran the risk of crocodiles and far more deadly mosquitoes; lions came snuffing round the machine as it lay helpless in the night; "large bellowing animals" came (it is Dr. Chalmers Mitchell's description, and we do wonder what they were); wild natives came, sometimes armed with bows — "Dinkas and cannibals" (who, however, were only helpful, as one usually finds cannibals to be unless irritated). It was in every sense a stirring adventure.

And then consider the speed. During the hours that the "Times" Vickers-Vimy machine was actually flying, the average speed was seventy-five miles. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell calculates that, if only all went well, the whole

distance from Cairo to the Cape could be covered in five days, though each day's flight lasted only from 6 P.M. till noon; which would give the passengers time to stroll about, glance at the crocodiles and hand cigarettes to the cannibals. Still greater speed would be probable, for Colonel van Ryneveld reports that once, when chased by a dust hurricane, he covered three hundred and sixty-six miles in less than three hours. In spite of all accidents and disasters, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell's journey from Cairo to Tabora took only three weeks, and what are three weeks when one remembers the names of Grant and Speke and Burton; when one remembers the earliest exploration of Victoria Nyanza, or even what the journey to Khartum used to mean? Take that first stage. What thoughts were called up by such names as Luxor, Assuan, Atbara, Omdurman, Khartum, only thirty-five years ago; or only twenty-two years ago! Think of Wolseley and his toiling Nile boats, and of Herbert Stewart, and Fred Burnaby, and Kitchener himself! Over the scenes of their struggles and tragedies the "Times" machine sped as easily as a flamingo when, with outstretched neck and wings, it seeks the Mountains of the Moon.

Undoubtedly, it is another triumph for that plastic little animal called Man. By mechanical proxy he has to some extent recovered the faculty of flight, which misguided generations of ancestors lost for him long ago. In flight he is not yet so secure as the albatross, nor so swift as the swift, nor so noiseless as the eagle; but all these qualities will be added to him in time, and he will think no more of launching into the sky for Cape Town than the gannet thinks of launching out from Dover cliffs for Calais sands. As Mr. Johnson, managing director of the Rolls-Royce Company, wrote to the *Times* last Tuesday, "Central Africa has always resisted, with ill temper, the inroads of civilization." The aeroplane is breaking down that re-

sistance, and old Africa will have to endure it with what temper she may. This year has in its infancy already witnessed a fresh triumph of civilization; or if that triumph is not yet complete, it will be complete before the year is out.

One of the three characteristics of advancing civilization has been the increase of man's power of moving rapidly from one place to another. The other two have been the rapid multiplication of clothes and other useful products by machinery, and the elaboration of means for the self-destruction of man's genus. Probably the mechanical reproduction of clothes, and so forth, has been on the whole the most serviceable of the three, though we cannot withhold our sympathy from the War Office chemists, who had devised gases to poison whole army-corps and bombs to wipe out whole cities just after the late war came to an end. However, they have a future, as Lord Beaconsfield once said of Greece, and we do not question their power to carry their service to civilization so far that man may soon cease upon the earth and the Day of Judgment become unnecessary. But certainly the development of speedy movement from place to place has within the last century been almost as remarkable as the growth of factories or the invention of implements for the destruction of mankind. A century ago, we suppose, it took about three months for mails to reach Natal from London; next year a week may do it. A century ago the journey to Australia was quick at six months; next year it may take a fortnight. It would be curious to inquire whether this astonishing growth of civilization has made the letters better worth reading, or the passengers better worth knowing; but that is too difficult an investigation for the moment.

Without trying to investigate the values of personality, let us rapidly contrast the new method of African travel

with the old. Everyone has read the diaries or logs kept by Dr. Chalmers Mitchell and other flyers. We have summarized the main difficulties above — the engine troubles, the heat, the mist, the storms, and so on. Beyond these difficulties, the chief interests were food (the universal interest), and the hasty glimpses of desert, hills, forests, rivers, ant-heaps, and herds of animals, seen from above in the relativity of bird's-eye perspective, so that the creatures must have looked like slugs, possessing little but back. In his three weeks' trip, despite accidents and delays, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell covered 2628 miles, but that was really all he saw, or suffered, or did. Contrast with civilization's growing rapidity the present writer's memory of a journey he made in Central Africa a few years ago. "He who goes to Africa," he ignorantly wrote in those days, "leaves time behind." For the first four or five hundred miles (till a "fly-country" was reached) he was able to travel by ox-wagon, and it took him two months. Mount an ox-wagon and you forget all time. Like the to-morrows of life, it creeps in its petty pace, and soon after its wheels have reached their extreme velocity of three miles an hour (less than a sixth the rate of Mr. Winston Churchill's new tanks or his "foxhounds") you learn how vain are all calculations of speed and years. Yet apart from mere speed, the ox-wagon possesses most advantages of an express train, and ever so many others of greater value. An express train would have traversed these four or five hundred miles in one winter night, and have left only a tedious blank upon the mind. But how can the writer ever forget those moments of intense existence when the twenty-four oxen in the team took fright at the top of a slimy slope ending in a river, and rushed jostling, backing, charging, sliding helplessly down, with the wagon swaying behind them, leaping over rocks, plunging into holes, swinging at right angles to the track,

and finally crashing into the river with all four wheels in air? Or how in an express or aeroplane could he have won the experience of crossing streams hardly six feet deep and twenty yards broad in a wagon which took a long day to cross, where a train would have leaped a little bridge, and an aeroplane would not even have seen the water? To take the bed of the wagon off the wheels; to spread the "sail" or canvas hood under it so as to convert it into a boat; to launch it and drag it to and fro through the water, loading and unloading on each bank so that all the stuff came over dry; to swim the oxen across; to tie six of them to the long chain and induce them to draw the wheels and frame of the wagon under water through to the farther bank; to take off the sail in the water and float the bed into its place upon the beam again — what a lifelong lesson in hydraulics, in the nature of animals, in language, and in self-control!

Dr. Chalmers Mitchell is a most distinguished zoölogist, but if he had traveled over Africa only by aeroplane, what would he know about the habits and mentality even of tame oxen? He would hardly understand how to drive a team of sixteen span by shouting the oxen's names without use of rein or whip, much as one might steer an eight without a rudder by calling on stroke-side or bow-side to "put more beef into it." Perhaps he would not even know that the greatest joy you can give an ox or a native child is a lick of salt. He would not have learned how to catch and harness and sit a riding-ox; nor have felt the significance of the Boer phrase, "slaughter-holes," upon the track; nor have discovered why an ox, which loves to wallow up to its nose in slime when at large, will shun the least sign of mud upon the track when harnessed, as a dainty woman shuns a puddle in Regent Street; nor why the ox absolutely refuses to pull when it rains; nor why he will die rather than wet his tail in crossing a stream.

Great knowledge Dr. Chalmers Mitchell has already, but as a mere passenger in an aeroplane, what could he learn of animals beyond that distant prospect of their backs, and the sound of large bellowing beasts, which he did not even identify? What could the mere flyer know of the beautiful roan antelope, the still more beautiful koodoo, the bluebock, the lechwe, the hartebeest, the wildebeest or gnu, the stinking water-buck, the reed-buck, the oribi, the little duiker, or "diver," so called from its way of leaping through high grass and disappearing after each bound? Oh, it is fine to see any deer run, but few joys are so delightful as to watch the easy grace of a duiker disappearing in the distance after you have missed him!

And besides, there are the strange and glorious birds, still to be seen by the humble traveler, in spite of civilized woman's appalling cruelty; and there are gorgeous butterflies hovering over wet patches or touches of salt in the desert; and bees also passionate for salt; and peculiar flowers hanging over the sources of vast rivers. And there are varied specimens of mankind, with varied music, dances, arts, customs, and beliefs. All these varieties and delights (besides the excitement of escaping many horrible diseases) are the reward of the patient, old-fashioned African traveler, but of them the aeroplane flyer will never know. To be happy in Africa a man should have something ox-like in his nature. Like an ox, or like "him that believeth," he must never make haste. He should accept his destiny in time and space as he plods on his way. He must let time run over him, nor dream that in any other place he could be happier than where he is.

We all love flying and the flyers. We honor the aeroplane. It is one of the finest inventions of man. Though inferior to a bird's wing, it is the best substitute we have as yet. No doubt, Central Africa, "which has always resisted, with ill temper, the inroads of civilization" up to

now, will yield as a black but comely woman is expected to. But all these conquests of civilization over space mean the shrinkage of the earth. They destroy a mystery, and wipe out the promise of surprise from the world's lovely face. In his poem of "Bacchanalia," Matthew Arnold compared the coming of the new age to the inrush of Bacchanals into a quiet country scene at evening. Suddenly over the accepted peace of the quiet world the new spirit sweeps and gyrates: —

> See! on the cumbered plain
> Clearing a stage,
> Scattering the past about,
> Comes the new age.

All very splendid and beautiful, no doubt! But "Ah, so the silence was! So was the hush!" sighs the poet. As someone has written of the earth, "That wild star which was our mother is vanishing from under heaven. She is losing the incalculable variety, the careless incertitude which made the life of her sons so dangerous and so sweet." One remembers the preparations for journeying across Africa in the olden days — the careful selection of kit and baggage, the provision for food, the preparation for carriers here and oxen there, the rifles, the shotguns, the tents. Every day's march was an adventure, a liberal education, a strain upon character. In a year or two the pursy citizen will be flown high in air above those wild and adventurous scenes. He will receive news by wireless, and hardly feel separated from the *Times*. He will hold sweepstakes on the length of the daily course, and enjoy buttered toast with his afternoon tea. It will hardly be worth while to pack a suit case for the trip, and Central Africa will have ceased to resist the inroads of civilization.

THE SNOW MEN

FREDA KIRCHWEY

To read the accounts of the Mount Everest expedition is to indulge in a vicarious adventure of stirring dimensions. It lifts one to a height from which small escarpments like our own Rockies appear as mere contour lines on a map, and one's personal exploits on native peaks seem as adventurous as skipping rope. You climb over frozen passes 23,000 feet above the sea, and camp in a storm of fine snow and a northwest gale five hundred feet lower, where, after a night of zero temperature, you welcome a few rays of sunshine, melt your sardines, eat them, and make ready to climb again. After a few days of this, in the words of one of the members of the expedition, you are "not sorry to return to the 20,000-foot camp," which seems quite "homelike."

But perhaps you are one of those to whom heights in feet are as dim as cube roots and other unhappy childhood memories. Even then it is possible to feel the terror and the thrill of those bleak slopes. Our own little Pike's Peak, less than half the height of Everest, rises perhaps 5000 feet from its base. But on the sides of Everest the explorer comes upon sheer cliffs dropping straight away for more than twice that distance into measureless ravines, cliffs towering higher than Mount Hood towers above the sea. Perhaps, after all, those heights and depths can only be half imagined, half believed in.

There are other aspects of the trip no less alluring. Leaving the 20,000-foot camp on the slope of Everest on September 23, a part of the expedition climbed a pass 2500 feet above them, their way leading over ice-falls and

treacherous stretches of soft snow. And at this altitude in a ragged desolation of snow and ice and rock were found signs of life. Says the writer whom we quoted above: "There were curious tracks in the snow. We distinguished hare and fox tracks, but one mark, like that of a human foot, was most puzzling. The coolies assured us that it was the track of a wild hairy man, and that these men were occasionally to be found in the wildest and most inaccessible mountains." And then the writer goes on stubbornly uphill, remarking on the view and leaving his readers intrigued and unsatisfied. What about these hairy men, anyway? Are they our evolutionary ancestors wandering on those biting, fireless heights? Or are they some sort of large, snow-going monkey, tracking barefoot over the peaks? Or are scientists prone like the rest of us to mistake cattle for moose and Himalayan bears, perhaps, for wild men? At any rate they should not leave us at a loose end. We want to know more about these hardy brethren of ours living so serenely above the petty wars and conferences and business depressions that haunt the rest of us.

When the winter blizzards have passed, and the brilliant flowers bloom again in little meadows on the lower slopes, and the Everest explorers load their coolies and make a fresh start up over the icy ways that they have found, let them turn aside for a while from the dazzling point that beckons to them and evades them. We are inspired by the effort to conquer those disdainful heights, but deep in our hearts we are far more thrilled by the casual human touch in the story. Let them turn aside and follow after those hairy men, and interview them on the ways of life in the thin air and the cool breezes and the million-year snows that cover the jagged peak of the world, reaching five miles toward the sun.

SEA STORIES

EDMUND LESTER PEARSON

THERE is a pretty large amount of pose in books about the sea, and in the comments about the books about the sea. A clever writer goes down to the wharf and smells tar or indigo or tapioca, or whatever it is that any good reporter on an assignment always manages to smell to please his editor, and comes back stuffed full of more romance than he or anybody else would experience in fourteen trips around the world. Such is literature. That the sailorman, with a seeing eye, does behold signs and wonders I have no manner of doubt. Mr. Frank Bullen saw some extraordinary spectacle — a fight between an octopus and a whale, in the middle of a moonlight night. He ran below, to tell the captain, so that that mariner might enjoy it too. But he was rewarded by having a boot thrown at his head. I have talked with sailors and sea-captains who have had marvelous experiences — a collision on a calm sea in the Indian Ocean, capture by the Alabama, with Perry in the Japanese ports. And with others who could, after thirty years at sea, remember nothing more entrancing to discuss than the comparative prices of "corned shoulder" in Singapore, Colon, and Halifax.

In Captain Jacob Trent, master of the brig Flying Scud, you have a picture of a sea-captain. Stevenson has drawn it in *The Wrecker*, that first-rate novel of the sea (more than three-fourths on land) which contains half-a-dozen pages or single paragraphs any one of which is so much better than the entire prose works of the living nautical writers, that the comparison is painful. Trent opened a

bottle of Cape wine for his guests and discoursed of the one thing in his life which gave him pride: the pawnshop which, under the name of "bank," he had kept in Cardiff. "He had been forty years at sea, had five times suffered shipwreck, was once nine months the prisoner of a pepper rajah, and had seen service under fire in Chinese rivers; but the only thing he cared to talk of, the only thing of which he was vain or with which he thought it possible to interest a stranger, was his career as a money-lender in the slums of a seaport town."

Almost always the romance of the sea ends at the water's edge. It is not what the sea contains, nor what it bears upon its surface, nor what takes place in ships upon it, that constitutes romance. It is what it causes men to imagine: the thoughts of what may lie below its blue rim. That is why W. W. Jacobs' stories are so good — they are coastwise tales, or else yarns of men on shore talking about the sea. That is why Miss Fox-Smith's poems are excellent — she goes down to the docks and dreams dreams evoked by the names of the ships, and lets her fancy create the adventures they never have had. And that is why the book which caused me to express these opinions is perhaps the author's best. Mr. Tomlinson, in *London River*, hardly goes to sea at all. He stays ashore and talks about shipping.

And there is, certainly, good sea-adventuring, too. But not in the books which dwell long upon descriptions of storms and other kinds of weather. Mark Twain set an admirable precedent when he wrote at the beginning of one of his novels: "There is no weather in this book." One paragraph in *The Wrecker*, one which it seems to me should attract to the novel anyone who has never enjoyed that story, is this: "It is perhaps because I know the sequel, but I can never think upon this voyage without a profound sense of pity and mystery; of the ship (once

within the whim of a rich blackguard) faring with her battered fineries and upon her homely errand, across the plains of ocean and past the gorgeous scenery of dawn and sunset; and the ship's company, so strangely assembled, so Britishly chuckle-headed, filling their days with chaff in place of conversation; no human book on board with them except Haddon's '*Buckle*,' and not a creature fit either to read or to understand it; and the one mark of any civilized interest being when Carthew filled in his spare hours with the pencil and the brush: the whole unconscious crew of them posting in the meanwhile toward so tragic a disaster."

THE IMMORTAL WHITE WHALE[1]

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye.
— *Matthew Arnold.*

And among these great whales, first, foremost, and immortal, is Moby Dick, the Great White Whale.

It is seventy years, just the measure of my own lifetime, since the white head and hump of Moby Dick suddenly loomed out of the blue water not very far to leeward. "There she blows, there she blows, a hump like a snowhill. It is Moby Dick."

Earlier in the same year *The Whale* had been published in New York, and at once, as indeed might have been expected, aroused the enthusiasm of Nathaniel Hawthorne; but, though *Moby Dick* has been reprinted in England three or four times since 1851, none of these reprints has attracted sufficient attention.

Books have their fates, and it must not for one moment be supposed that this masterpiece of eloquence, character, and adventure, despite a small circulation, hard to explain even in the year of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, fell flat. It did nothing of the kind; for from the very first it numbered good intellects among the grown-ups, and excited the same

[1] *Moby Dick; or The Whale*, by Hermann Melville, with an introduction by Viola Meynell. "The World's Classics" (Oxford University Press. 2*s*.6*d*. net).

enchanted admiration among a limited number of fortunate children, as then did, and do now, the books of that kindred spirit, though of the earth and not the sea — George Borrow.

Among those lucky youngsters, the godchildren of Apollo, were included some subsequently-celebrated writers who, having been allowed to feed their infant genius on the quintessential oils and the delectable blubber of this incomparable beast, have risen into fame and attained a circulation quite beyond the dreams of the New Yorker, who, born in 1819, of (so Miss Meynell tells us) mixed Dutch and English stock, went to sea as a cabin boy on a vessel trading to Liverpool, and wrote *Moby Dick* in his thirty-second year. The sea remained Melville's element through a life which ended in 1891. The ocean he loved best was the Pacific, which "rolls the midmost waters of the world."

But, though there is no need to commiserate Hermann Melville on his limited sales, it is none the less a deprivation to a man of my age never to have encountered in the days of his youth, amid his various book-adventures, the *Great White Whale*, the ship Pequod, the monomaniacal Captain Ahab forever pursuing Moby Dick round the world, the tattooed, lovable cannibal, Queequeg, with his pocket-idol, the mysterious stranger Fedallah, the unaccountable Elijah, Starbuck, Stubbs, and Flash, and the rest of the crew of the doomed whaler.

How this came about I cannot guess, for the house was otherwise well-stored with masterpieces, but so it was; nor was it until I was some years older than Melville when he wrote *Moby Dick*, that I first heard his name. I owed my introduction to *Omoo*, *Typee*, and *The Whale* to that exquisite judge of a good book, Sir Alfred Lyall, who was shocked at my ignorance, and most emphatically urged me to read *Omoo* and *Typee;* but, as ill luck would have it,

he did not specially dwell upon *The Whale*. To hear was, in those days, to obey, and a secondhand bookseller almost at once supplied me with these three books.

Even then I was not out of the Wood of Ignorance, for though I was greatly taken with *Omoo* and *Typee* I was not so bewitched by them as to begin at once upon the three volumes of *The Whale* — which I allowed to remain for a whole decade unread. One happy day I took them down, and then, and then only, did Moby Dick swim into my ken. Oh, woeful waste! Is there, I wonder (looking all round me), another such book lying neglected in this very room? And yet, now, when full of my wrongs, I have discovered that all this time I had intimate friends, and even relatives, not much addicted to holding their peace, who knew all about Ahab and Bildad and Peleg and Moby Dick, and yet never gave me a hint of their existence. What on earth were they talking about all these years! I cannot remember. Now that *Moby Dick* is in the "World's Classics," and can be had for half-a-crown of all booksellers, the excuses of Ignorance or Concealment can no longer be urged on anyone's behalf in the High Court of Taste.

The two striking features of this book, after allowing for the fact that it is a work of genius and therefore sui generis, are, as it appears to me, its most amazing eloquence, and its mingling of an ever-present romanticism of style with an almost savage reality of narrative.

Eloquence is no common quality in English books, for to be really eloquent in cold print requires great courage, almost impudence, mixed with an extreme sensitiveness of nature; and sensitive men are apt to be timid with their pens and to hesitate long before beginning a sentence with the particle, O! "I think it may be observed," says Dr. Johnson in his *Life of Pope*, "that the particle O at the beginning of a sentence always offends." Like most of the sayings that issued from the Johnsonian Mint, this dread

dictum has a ring of truth about it, but will not bear close examination. In the June number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1787, a learned critic, signing himself J. A., had no difficulty in supplying the cultivated readers of that admirable periodical with a number of famous passages both of prose and poetry, culled from Hebrew, Latin, and English authors of the greatest celebrity, all beginning with this bold particle. (See Walker's *Selections from the Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. II, page 341.)

I own to thinking but little of any author, be he poet or prose man, who dares not occasionally run the risk (and it is a risk) of beginning a sentence with an O! George Borrow never hesitated, and though Hermann Melville is not so prodigal, he provides his readers with some splendid examples of this audacity; nor can I think that any reader of *The Whale* will deny the claim of its author to be one of the most eloquent of our English writers. To give curtailed examples, torn from the context of a book, the absorbing interest of which is all hung upon one peg — the pursuit of Moby Dick by the monomaniacal captain whose leg had been devoured by the sea-monster — would be a blunder, so I pass on to the second feature.

That most distinguished writer known to us as R. L. S., who, in his bundle of good humors, had one especially delightful shaft which he often employed to make fun of himself, invented a new word whereby to describe his method of dressing up a romance. He called it "tushery." Now there is no tushery in *The Whale*. It is romantic from end to end, and eloquent throughout, but it is also grim and real. As an acute feminine critic once said to me about Melville's style in *The Whale*, "it bruises you all over." You not only share the feelings, but all the hardships of the crew of the Pequod, and your bones ache accordingly. To give quotations, as I have already said, would be ridiculous, but to those who fight shy of a book they know

nothing about, "The Town-Ho's Story" (as told at the Golden Inn, Lima), or the chapter entitled "The Whiteness of the Whale," may safely be recommended to timid readers.

It will be curious to observe whether a generation of readers brought up on another kind of fare will repair the injustice done by their grandparents in 1851.

Here and there a page, or even a chapter, of *The Whale* may be skipped with comparative impunity, but nobody but a sea-gudgeon can ever be sent to sleep between its pages. "And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of the whale's mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in great security and there sleeps." (Montaigne in his *Apology for Raimond de Sebonne.*)

We're not as "gudgeons" are;
Smith, take a fresh cigar!
Jones, the tobacco-jar!
Here's to thee, Melville!

BIRD MUSIC

W. H. HUDSON

To those who delight in bird music it appears strange that there should be many persons who are quite indifferent to it, who will hear you speak of its charm or beauty with impatience and perhaps incredulity. It is probable that in many cases the indifference is the result of a town life and the dulling effect on the sense of hearing of an atmosphere of loud jarring noises, also of the loudness of the instrumental music to which they are accustomed. Our civilization is a noisy one, and as it increases in noisiness the smaller, more delicate musical instruments, which must be heard in a quiet atmosphere, lose their ancient charm and finally become obsolete. The tendency is toward louder instruments and masses of sound; the piano is a universal favorite, and the more thunder you get out of it the better it is liked.

In this as in other things our gain is our loss; if in human music the sweetest, most delicate instrumental sounds cease to please, or even to be tolerable, on account of their small volume, how could the very best of the natural music of birds delight us — the small exquisite strains emitted by the wagtails and pipits, the wheatear and whinchat, the willow wren and wood wren, the linnet and reed warbler? The very most that can be said of such minute melodies is that, like the little gurgling and lisping sounds of a pebbly streamlet, and of wind in leaves, and the patter of rain, it is soothing.

Another cause of indifference is that for some persons the sounds are without expression.

We know that when the occasions of past happiness,

and the fact of the happiness itself, have been forgotten, something yet remains to us — a vague, pleasurable emotion which may be evoked by any scene, or object, or melody, or phrase, or any sight or sound in nature once associated with such happiness. It is this halo, this borrowed color of a thing, which gives the expression. Those who say that they find an indefinable charm or beauty in any sight or sound do not as a rule know that it is not a quality of the thing itself which moves them: that their pleasure is almost wholly due to association, and that in this case they "receive but what they give."

An instance of this charm which any natural object or sound may have for us is given by Gilbert White in his description of an insect. "The shrilling of the field cricket," he says, "though sharp and stridulous, yet marvelously delights some hearers, filling their minds with a train of summer ideas of everything that is rural, verdurous, and joyous." There can be no such "train of ideas" nor any vague sense of happiness due to association caused by a bird's voice to one whose life or its early, most happy, and impressible period has been spent apart from rural scenes. The voice may be agreeable if the quality is good, but it is expressionless.

To others, especially to those who have lived with and have been lovers of nature from the cradle, even a slight bird-sound may produce a magical effect; and I here recall an experience of the kind which I had two or three summers ago at Harrogate.

I should say, judging from its fine appearance and the numbers of fine people frequenting it, that Harrogate must be highly esteemed by town-loving folk; it is a parasitic town, nevertheless, and on that account alone distasteful to me; and to make matters worse I there found myself in a numerous company of the sick — pilgrims from all parts of the land to that pool in which they fondly hoped

they would be cured of their ills. Perhaps they did not all hope for a complete cure, as there was a very large proportion of well-nourished, middle-aged, and elderly gentlemen with hard red or port-wine faces and watery eyes, who walked or hobbled painfully, some with the aid of two sticks, others with crutches, while many were seen in bath-chairs. I took it that these well-to-do, well-fed gentlemen were victims of gout and rheumatism.

In this crowd of sufferers mixed with fashionables I was alone, out of my element, depressed, and should have been miserable but for a small bird, or rather a small bird-voice. Every day, when I went to the well in the gardens to drink a tumbler of magnesia water and sit there for an hour or so, I heard the same delicate wandering aerial sound, the thin plaintive note of the same little bird, a willow wren, which had taken up its summer-end residence at that spot. I do not mean a song: a little bird when moulting, concealed in a thick shrubbery, has no heart to sing; it was only his familiar faint little sorrowful call-note.

People came in numbers at certain hours of the day to the spring and pavilion to drink water and sit in groups chatting, flirting, laughing, or to pace the walks, while the children ran and romped about the green lawns or sailed their little boats on the running water; and by and by the crowd would begin to drift away as mealtime approached, until the gardens would be silent and deserted. But the small bird was always there, and though hidden among the bushes where they grew thickest he was not wholly invisible. At intervals his minute shadowy flitting form could be discerned at some spot where there was a slight opening among the dense-clustered leaves, seen for a moment or two, then gone. And even when the place was fullest of people and the sound of talk and laughter loudest, still, at intervals, that faint tenuous sorrowful little sound would be audible through it all. Listening for

it, and hearing it, and sometimes catching a glimpse of the small restless creature among the deep green foliage near my seat, a curious sense of dissatisfaction, of disharmony, would pass away; the pavilion, the kiosks, the graveled walks and offensive flower-beds, the well-dressed invalids and idlers, the artificiality of the scene, with big hotel-buildings for background, would be to me something illusory — a mental picture, which I could dismiss from my mind at any moment, or an appearance which would vanish at a breath of wind or on the coming of a cloud over the sun. The people sitting and moving about me had no real existence; I alone existed there, with a willow wren for companion, and was sitting not on an iron chair painted green, but on the root of an old oak or beech tree, or on a bed of pine needles, with the smell of pine and bracken in my nostrils, with only that wandering, aerial, tender voice, that gossamer thread of sound, floating on the silence.

This is doubtless an extreme example of the power of expression, and could perhaps only be experienced by one whose chief pleasure from childhood has been in wild birds and who delights in bird voices above all sounds. But expression is not everything; there is a charm in some sounds so great that we love them from the first time of hearing, when they are without associations with a happy past; and in such cases we can suppose that the emotional expression, if it exists at all, is produced indirectly and forms but a slight element in the aesthetic effect.

There is, besides expression, another thing not often taken into account, which makes some bird melodies impress us more than others — the state of mind, or mood, we are in and the conditions in which it is heard. Yet it makes a world of difference even in the songs of species which we love best for their intrinsic beauty. The curious thing is that, after hearing a particular bird-music in

exceptionally favorable circumstances, the hearer should become convinced that *this* musician is the best. It may not be at its best on the next occasion of hearing it, or ever again; but the image of the intense pleasure it once produced persists in his mind and the delusion remains.

There are states of the atmosphere when distant objects seem near and all nature takes on a rare loveliness which makes it like a new earth. There are states, too, when bird sounds seem purer, brighter, more resonant than at other times, in some instances surprising us with new and mysteriously beautiful qualities.

After copious rains in summer there is often a tender silveriness in the sunlit air, the effect of abundant moisture; and on such occasions we sometimes note a difference in bird songs and cries, as if they, too, like all else, had been washed and purified; and just as we inhale the new delicious air into our lungs we take the new melody into our souls. In this case, the exhilarating effect of the newly washed and brightened air and sight of the blue sky after the depressing cloud has passed undoubtedly count for much; the responsive physical change in us acts on the sense organs, and they, too, appear to have been washed and made clean and able to render truer and brighter images than before.

Then, too, we have the other cause, in which all natural sounds, especially bird sounds, produce an unusual effect owing to some special circumstances or to a conjunction of favorable circumstances. It is pure chance; the effect of to-day will never be repeated; it has gone for ever, like the last beautiful sunset we witnessed. But there will be many more beautiful summers to gladden our sight.

On looking on a meadow yellow with buttercups, I have seen one flower, or a single petal, far out, perhaps, in the middle of the fields, which instantly caught and kept my sight — one flower among a thousand thousand flowers,

all alike. It was because it had caught and reflected the light at such an angle that its yellow enameled surface shone and sparkled like a piece of burnished gold. By some such chance a song, a note, may reach the sense with a strange beauty, glorified beyond all other sounds.

One evening, walking in a park near Oxford, I stopped to admire a hawthorn tree covered with its fresh bloom. On a twig on the thorn a female chaffinch was perched, silent and motionless, when presently from the top of an elm tree close by its mate flew down, describing a pretty, wavering curve in its descent, and arriving at the bush, and still flying, circling round it, he emitted his song: not the usual loud impetuous song he utters when perched — in form or shape only it was the same, the notes issuing in the same order, but lower, infinitely sweeter, tender, etherealized. The song ended as the bird dropped lightly by the side of its little mate.

I could hardly credit my own senses, so beautiful had seemed this subdued lyric from a songster we regard as very inferior to some of the warblers in delicacy and expressiveness.

On another occasion I was walking across a furze-grown common after dark on a very cold windy evening in early April, when at a distance of about forty yards from me a whinchat warbled the fullest, sweetest song I ever listened to from that bird. After a brief interval the song was repeated; then once again. Whether it was the exceeding purity of the sound, so clear, so wondrously sweet, so unexpected at that hour, or the darkness and silence of that solitary place which gave it an almost preternatural beauty, I cannot say, but the effect on me was so great that I have never walked by night in spring in any furzy place without pausing and listening from time to time with the pleased expectation of hearing it again.

Probably in these two instances and in a dozen others

which I could cite the song was uttered by chance at the precise moment when it would be most impressive — when the conditions and the mood they had induced were most favorable. But the sound too may create the mood, as was the case in the following instance.

I have heard many wonderful blackbirds, for like all songsters, feathered as well as human, they vary greatly in merit, and — *pace* Dr. A. R. Wallace — there is such a thing as genius in nature; but I think the one which most impressed me was just an ordinary blackbird. I was staying at a farmhouse in the New Forest, and on the side of the house where I slept there was a large arborvitæ in which a blackbird roosted every night on a level with my window. Now every morning, at half-past three, this bird would begin to sing and go on repeating his song at short intervals for about half an hour. It was very silent at that time; I could hear no other bird; and the sound coming in at the open window from a distance of but five yards had such a marvelous beauty that I could have wished for no more blessed existence than to lie there, head on pillow, with the pale early light and the perfume of night flowers in the room, listening to that divine sound.

THE BEE'S DAY

The London *Nation*

When the January day is seasonable, that is, not the abnormal "muggy" day that has been our lot of late, nothing but direct sunshine wakes up the bee. The sun, wandering behind the eastern and southern hills, only manages to peep into the garden at about twelve o'clock. When he has shone on the hives for half an hour or so, the cluster of bees clinging tight to the central combs swells a little as the individuals stir in their sleep. The livelier members of the community stretch themselves and perhaps wander round the edge of a neighboring vacant comb. Perhaps you see one testing the air on the alighting-board, or two comparing notes about the rumor of spring that is being whispered. Or away in the garden, a bee hums round you and you decide from the note of its hum that it has come out for a drop of water. If so, for what other purpose than to feed the first tiny batch of grubs growing from the queen's first eggs of the year in the midst of the winter cluster? The sun passes on, cold redescends on the garden, and the bees that stretched their legs and went off adventurously into the cold parts of the hive return to the cluster, which contracts to the dimensions of full sleep. The bee's winter day is ended.

On another day, also in the winter, the temperature may get up — just at the height of the sun — to a pitch that induces the cleansing flight. The first bee out rises on the wing and indulges in a joy-dance, to and fro and up and down. Her hum, sounding crescendo and diminuendo through the doorway, calls others to the dance, and soon a few hundred bees are curvetting in the sunshine, some

in small circles, others in large, their wings glancing like diamonds through the air, and bright sprays falling as the little bodies are relieved of the waste of a long winter's feeding. Nothing near the whole population is seen on the wing together, so probably the dance of each individual is brief, new performers constantly appearing and tired ones as constantly retiring. In half an hour the exercise may be finished, and the little creatures, warmed and invigorated by the midday service, cling again more and more tightly in their cluster. Such another day may not come for a month, and during that time, if the weather is cold, a silence almost like that of the tomb reigns in the hive.

Even in the coldest, deadest weather, there is some hero bee that gets up, and tidies up the crumbs of wax broken in the sleepy carouse, and even carries out the bodies of comrades that have died since last flight-time. When the weather is very cold, the little scraps are dropped only just without the door. When it is a little warmer, they are carried halfway down the alighting-board, and in sunshine you can see brave live bees hook themselves to dead ones and carry them on the wing to a safe and sanitary distance from the hive. This simple act of carrying off the dead is the one lately chosen by a friend as the breaking point of his credulity, when he was being told a little about a bee's instinct. Nor do these sanitators choose the warmest and brightest hour of the day for their voluntary labor. We ourselves do not get up so early in the morning that we cannot see, when first we look at the hive that is opposite the window, a few grains of wax upon the doorstep that were not there over night. It is a perilous job for the little sweeper. Apart from the cluster, she may not have warmth enough to keep her limbs moving till she regains the living stove, and then she must freeze to death, even within the hive.

A cold winter is better than a mild one for the bees. When it is cold they sleep; to sleep is to live slowly, and that needs little food. In a mild winter the bees are always awake and moving about a little, and consuming a great deal more food than when they are asleep. Their stores have melted to a very low ebb for the time of the year, and the Food Controller only allows them six pounds of sugar per hive to keep them till the end of May. The latter fact may be beyond their knowledge, but the poverty of their combs is patent enough. It argues then great faith or imprudence in them to begin raising extra mouths on old honey or candy and water from the bare earth. They have, perhaps, a little pollen from the ivy blossom, which ceased to yield last November. The cold blossom of the laurestinus is now open, but has not yet attracted a bee, nor did they even come to a few dazzling blue eyes that the hepatica opened one sunny hour. Yet they have undoubtedly coaxed their queen into laying a little circle of eggs in the winter nest, and are feeding the grubs under a blanket of throbbing bodies.

Soon the sun will be shining on snowdrops, whose proper name is Fair Maids of February. They are almost too chaste to be kissed, but the bees will kiss them, indiscriminately with Chionodoxa, though in summer no bee visits two kinds of flower at one outing. In March come the crocuses, which are a stepping-stone to pussy willow, coltsfoot, dandelion, — all the flowers of summer, — but before we have reached the May, all the bees in our hive now, save only the queen, will be dead. Six months' life will have worn them out, even though it consists of long winter nights of sleep and a few joyous spring days among the new flowers. Little more than six weeks will be the life-span of those that work in May and June among the hot flowers of that time, when the sun rides high for twelve good hours and the fanners must keep the hive roaring

all night, that the cooks may get the honey nicely packed away for the winter.

Just a peep out of doors at the bare earth that will some day put on flowers, then one's rations from the next file, and off to sleep again in the cluster — that is the bee's day in winter. In the summer, the hive is pouring bees into the blue air like the shots from several machine-guns. The returning bees fall like snow and would drift the porch a foot deep in a few seconds, if the crowd did not melt into the hive as fast as it falls. What is the bee's day in this strenuous time? How many journeys does each one take into the summer fields? How many times does it return laden with honey and pollen? Strangely enough, only three or four times. Men have marked bees with an unmistakable splash of paint, and have then watched them out of and into the hive all through the summer day. You can reach the same astonishing conclusion by means of a little mathematics. There are scarcely ten really busy honey-gathering hours in a June day. That gives six hundred minutes.

Count the bees flying out of a hive in one minute: you will not make them more than two hundred. Thus, in the ten hours there are a hundred and twenty thousand bee-journeys. If the population of the hive is sixty thousand, only forty thousand bees are honey-gatherers; the others are covering the brood, feeding it, taking honey and pollen from the foragers, putting them in the cells, and generally occupied in household duties. Thus forty thousand bees make a hundred and twenty thousand journeys, or only three apiece.

They bring in forty thousand drops of honey, or rather, honey plus water, and if the hive is weighed at morning and at evening it is found to have gained about five pounds in weight. During the night, much of the moisture is fanned away by the wings of the bees appointed to that

office. It is hard work, vibrating the wings as though flying at speed and hanging on with one's claws so as not to be blown away. In fact, one works in summer the whole clock round, so that others may sleep the clock round in the cold dead of winter.

THIN ICE

WINTHROP PACKARD

Toward midnight the pond fell asleep. All day long it had frolicked with the boisterous north wind, pretending to frown and turn black in the face when the cold shoulders of the gale bore down upon its surface, dimpling as the pressure left it, and sparkling in brilliant glee as the low-hung sun laughed across the ruffles. The wind went down with the sun, as north winds often do, and left a clear mirror stretching from shore to shore, and reflecting the cold yellow of the winter twilight.

As this chill twilight iced into the frozen purple of dusk, tremulous stars quivered into being out of the violet blackness of space. The nebular hypothesis is born again in the heavens each still winter night. It must have slipped thence into the mind of Kant, as he stood in the growing dusk of some German December, watching the violet-gray frost vapors of the frozen sky condense into the liquid radiance of early starlight, then tremble again into the crystalline glints of unknown suns whirling in majestic array through the full night along the myriad miles of interstellar space.

Standing on the water's edge on such a night you realize that you are the very centre of a vast scintillating universe, for the stars shine with equal glory beneath your feet and above your head. The earth is forgotten. It has become transparent, and where before sunset gray sand lay beneath a half inch of water at your toe-tips, you now gaze downward through infinite space to the nadir, the uncharted, unfathomable distance checked off every thousand million miles or so by unnamed constellations that blur

into a Milky Way beneath your feet. The pond is very deep on still winter nights.

If you will take canoe and glide out into the centre, the illusion is complete. There is no more earth, nor do the waters under the earth remain; you float in the void of space with the Pleiades for your nearest neighbor and the polestar your only surety. In such situations only can you feel the full loom of the universe. The molecular theory is there stated with yourself as the one molecule at the centre of incomputability. It is a relief to shatter all this with a stroke of the paddle, shivering all the lower half of your incomputable universe into a quivering chaos, and as the shore looms black and uncertain in the bitter chill it is nevertheless good to see, for it is the homely earth coming back to you. You have had your last canoe-trip of the year, but it has carried you far.

No wonder that on such a night the pond, falling asleep for the long winter, dreams. A little after midnight it stirred uneasily in its sleep and a faint quiver ran across its surface. A laggard puff of the north wind that, straggling, had itself fallen asleep in the pine wood and waked again, was now hastening to catch up. The surface water had been below the freezing point for some time, and with the slight wakening the dreams began to write themselves all along as if the little puff of wind were a pencil that drew unformulated thoughts in ice crystals. Water lying absolutely still will often do this. Its temperature may go some degrees below the freezing point and it will still be unchanged. Stir it faintly and the ice crystals grow across it at the touch.

Strange to tell, too, the pond's dreams at first were not of the vast universe that lay hollowed out beneath the sky and was repeated to the eye in its clear depths. Its dreams were of earth and warmth, of vaporous days and humid nights when never a frost chill touched its surface

the long year through, and the record the little wind wrote in the ice crystals was of the growth of fern frond and palm and prehistoric plant-life that grew in tropic luxuriance in the days when the pond was young.

These first bold, free-hand sketches touched crystal to crystal and joined, embossing a strange network of arabesques, plants drawn faithfully, animals of the coal age sketched in and suggested only, while all among the figures great and small was the plaided level of open water. This solidified, dreamless, about and under the decorations, and the pond was frozen in from shore to shore. Thus I found it the next morning, level and black under one of those sunrises which seem to shatter the great crystal of the still atmosphere into prisms. The cold has been frozen out of the sky, and in its place remains some strange vivific principle, which is like an essence of immortality.

New ice thus formed has a wonderful strength in proportion to its thickness. It is by no means smooth, however. The embossing of the reproductions of these pond dreams of fern and palm and plesiosaurus makes hubbles under your steel as you glide over it, though little you care for that on your first skate of the year. The embossing it is, I think, that largely gives it its strength, and though it may crack and sag beneath you as you strike out, you know that its black texture is made up of interlacing crystals that slip by one another in the bending, but take a new grip and hold until your weight fairly tears them apart.

The small boy knows this instinctively and applies it as he successfully runs "teetley-bendoes" to the amazement and terror of the uninitiated grown-ups. If you have the heart of the small boy still, though you have an added hundred pounds in weight, you may yet dare as he does and add to the exhilaration born of the wine-sweet air the spice of audacity. An inch or so of transparent ice lies between you and a ducking among the fishes which dart

through the clear depths, fleeing before the under-water roar of your advance, for the cracks, starting beneath your feet and flashing in rainbow progress before you and to the right and left, send wild vibrations whooping and whanging through the ice all over the pond. Now the visible bottom drops away beneath you to an opaqueness that gives you a delicious little sudden gasp of fear, for you realize the depth into which you might sink; again it rises to meet you, and here you may bear down and gain added impetus, for you know that the ice will be thicker in shallow water.

So you go on, and ever on. It is not wise to retrace your strokes, for those ice crystals that gave to let you through and then gripped one another again to hold you up may not withstand a second impact; nor is it wise to stop. Mass and motion have given you momentum and you have acquired some of the obscure stability of the gyroscope. You tend to stay on your plane of motion, though the ice itself has strength to hold only part of your weight. Thus the wild duck, threshing the air with mighty strokes, glides over it, held up by the same obscure force. The ice has no time to break and let you through. You are over it and onto another bit of uncracked surface before it can let go.

The day warmed a little with a clear sun, but the frost that night bit deep again and the next morning the ice had nearly doubled in thickness and would not crack under any strain which my weight could put upon it. A second freezing, even though both be thin, gives a stronger ice than a single freezing of equal depth, just as the English bowmaker of the old days used to glue together a strip of lancewood and a strip of yew, or even two strips of the same wood, thus making a far stiffer bow than one made of a single piece of equivalent dimensions.

This ice was much smoother too. That evaporation which is steadily going on from the surface of ice even in the

coldest weather, the crystals passing into vapor without the intervening stage of water, had worn off the embossing. The ice, instead of being black, was gray with countless air-bubbles all through its texture. You will always find these after a day's clear sun on a first freezing. I fancy the ice crystals make minute burning glasses under the sun's rays and this causes tiny meltings within its own bulk, the steam of the fusing making the bubbles; or it may be that the air with which the north wind of two days before had been saturating the water was thus escaping from solution.

It was midday of this second day of skating-weather before I reached the pond. The sky was overcast, the wind piped shrill again, and there were snow squalls about. The pond was empty and lone. I thought no living creature there beside myself, and it was only at the second call of a familiar voice that I believed I heard it. Then, indeed, I stopped and listened up the wind. It came again, a wild and lonely whistle that was half a shout, beginning on the fifth of the scale, sliding to the top of the octave, and then to a third above, and I heard it with amazement. The pond was firmly covered with young ice. Why should a loon be sitting out on it and hooting at me?

There was silence for a space while I looked in vain, for the first flakes of a snow squall were whitening the air and had made the distant shore indistinct. Then it spoke again, almost confidentially, that still lonely but more pleasing whinny, a sort of *Who-who-who-who* that is like a tremulous question, weird laughter, or a note of pain, as best fits the mind of the listener. The voice came from the geographical centre of the pond's loneliness, the one point where a wild bird like the loon, obliged to make a stand, would find himself farthest from all frequented shores. I skated up the wind in that direction, but the snow blew in my eyes and I could see but little.

Suddenly right in front of me there was a wild yell of

dismay, despair, and defiance all mingled in a single loon note, but so clearly expressed that you could not fail to recognize them, then a quick splash, and I had almost skated into a hole in the ice some ten feet across.

Then I knew what had happened. A loon, wing-tipped by some poor marksman, had dropped into the pond before the freeze. He could dive and swim, no doubt, as well as ever, but could not leave the water. When the pond began to freeze he did the only thing possible in his losing fight. That was to seek the loneliest spot in the surface and keep an opening in the ice when it began to form. I could see the fifteen-foot circle which had been his haven for the first night and day. Then with the second freezing night he had been obliged to shorten this. Two feet and a half of new ice showed his inner line of defence rimmed accurately within the greater circle and showing much splashing where he had, I thought, breasted it desperately all the long night in his brave fight to keep it open.

How long without human intervention he might brave the elements and keep his narrowing circle unfrozen would of course depend on the weather. If it did not come on too severe, he might live on there till his wing healed and by a miracle win again to flight and safety. The cold would not trouble him, nor the icy water. The loon winters anywhere from southern Massachusetts south and, strong and well, has no fear of winter. But there entered into this the human equation. The next man along would be likely to go home and get a shotgun.

As I noted all this, a head appeared above the water in the pool. There was another shriek of alarm and it vanished in a flash and a splash. It was forty seconds by my watch before the bird appeared again. This time he rose almost fully to the surface and sounded a war cry, then dove again and was under for seventy seconds. And so long as I stood my distance motionless he came and

went, never above water for more than a few seconds, varying in length of time that he stayed below from half a minute to a minute and a quarter, and never going below without sounding the eerie heartbreak of his call.

Then I skated away to get my camera and was gone three-quarters of an hour. Returning I saw him in the distance, for the snow had almost passed. He saw me too and dived. Gliding up, I knelt at the very edge of the hole and was fixing the camera when he came up. He sat level on the surface for a second, seemingly not noticing me. Then, warned by a motion that I made in trying to adjust the focus, he sounded a wild and plaintive call that seemed to have in it mingled fear and defiance, heartbreak and triumph, and plunged beneath the surface with a vigor and decision that sent him far beneath the ice, his great webbed feet driving him with great jumps as a frog swims.

I saw him shoot away from the hole, trailing bubbles. I waited kneeling, watch in hand and thumb on bulb, a minute, two minutes, three, five, ten. The snow shut in again thick and I realized that the picture would never be taken. Instead I was kneeling at the deathbed of a wild Northern spirit that perhaps deliberately had taken that way of ending the unequal struggle.

The loon knows not the land. Even his nest he builds on the water's edge and clambers awkwardly to it with wings and bill as feet. The air and the water are his home, the water far more than the air, and he knows the underwater world as well as he does the surface. I shall never know whether my loon went so far in his flight beneath the ice that he failed to find his way back, or whether his strength gave out. Knowing his untamed and fearless spirit, I am inclined to believe that he deliberately elected to die at home, in the cool depths he loved, rather than come back to his poor refuge in the narrowing ice-circle and face that strange creature that knelt at the edge.

DEAD MATTER IN AFRICA

LLEWELYN POWYS

The sun was exactly overhead, beating down upon the parched African landscape.

I was riding with a friend over the plain of Lol-Dureto which lies under the Eburu mountains.

A hundred yards away two zebras, a male and a female, stood playing together. The stallion would whinny at the mare and trot round her. They were evidently lovers. With their thick necks and striped flanks they looked typical productions of Africa, obstinate, and fantastic. "Look at those two zebras," I said to my friend; "I bet you a rupee, I send a bullet into one of them." I got off my pony and raising my rifle took steady aim. A moment later and the mare zebra was down and kicking about in the dust and dry grass. At the sound of the report the stallion had stopped short in its gambols and galloped away; but it did not go far. It soon stood still and turned to look at us; and, as I remounted, and we rode away, I saw it trotting slowly back to its mate who was now lying quite still on her side.

"You made pretty good practice," said my friend. "Yes, it was not bad shooting," I answered.

We continued on our way together, but for some reason or another I felt oversensitive that day and was troubled by what I had done. It seemed to me that it was quite unpardonable to have taken the life of that zebra so carelessly, for no reason at all.

Far up in the zenith the equatorial sun blazed down upon us. I knew that in the sight of that heartless Gorgon's-eye of Africa it was no hellish thing that I had done.

I knew that he was far too used to African ways and the cruelty of tooth and claw.

The next day I rode to the Nagum valley and spent many hours dosing two thousand hoggets with bluestone and mustard. The incident of the day before had completely gone out of my mind; and even if I had remembered it the occasion hardly offered much opportunity for sentiment over a shot zebra, with so many sheep waiting for their medicine in the heat and dust of the boma. I dosed them until I was too tired to speak, pushing the narrow neck of the Worcester-sauce bottle into the sides of their mouths and holding it there, while they swallowed the proper quantity of liquid.

When at last I had finished, I mounted my pony and began riding home. For no especial reason I selected to return by way of the Lol-Dureto plain; I fancied perhaps that it was shorter.

I was tired and my pony was tired, oppressed by the late heat of the African afternoon. In a half dazed condition, I noticed subconsciously that there were a number of vultures circling about the sky before me. What is disturbing them, I wondered? At that moment my mind received a strange jolt and I was wide awake.

The vultures were circling over the zebra I had shot the day before; but they had not so much as plucked out her eyes, because the stallion was still there at her side, trotting to and fro, and furiously driving away any bird that settled on the ground near his dead mate. And as I sat on my pony watching the scene, I knew that this untamed fantastical animal, restlessly running to and fro in the vivid sunshine of that tropical noon, had thrown out a challenge against the material universe, more desperate, more beautiful, and more convincing than any I had ever heard from pulpit or platform.

CATS

ROBERT LYND

THE Champion Cat Show was held at the Crystal Palace during the week, but the champion cat was not there. One could not possibly allow him to appear in public. He is for show, but not in a cage. He does not compete, because he is above competition. You know this as well as I. Probably you possess him. I certainly do. That is the supreme test of a cat's excellence — the test of possession. One does not say "You should see Brailsford's cat" or "You should see Adcock's cat," or "You should see Sharpe's cat," but "You should see my cat." There is nothing we are more egoistic about — not even children — than about cats.

I have heard a man, for lack of anything better to boast about, boasting that his cat eats cheese. In anyone else's cat it would have seemed an inferior habit and only worth mentioning to the servant as a warning. But because the cat happens to be his cat, this man talks about its vice excitedly among women as though it were an accomplishment. It is seldom that one hears a cat publicly reproached with guilt by anyone above a cook. He is not permitted to steal from our own larder. But if he visits the next-door house by stealth and returns over the wall with a Dover sole in his jaws, we really cannot help laughing. We are a little nervous at first, and our mirth is tinged with pity as we think of the probably elderly and dyspeptic gentleman who has had his luncheon filched away almost from under his nose. If we were quite sure that it was from No. 14, and not from No. 9 or 11, that the fish had been stolen, we might — conceivably — call

round and offer to pay for it. But with a cat one is never quite sure. And we cannot call round on all the neighbors and make a general announcement that our cat is a thief. In any case the next move lies with the wronged neighbor. As day follows day, and there is no sign of his irate and murder-bent figure advancing up the path, we recover our mental balance and begin to see the cat's exploit in a new light. We do not yet extol it on moral grounds, but undoubtedly, the more we think of it, the deeper becomes our admiration.

Of the two great heroes of the Greeks, we admire one for his valor and one for his cunning. The epic of the cat is the epic of Odysseus. The old gentleman with the Dover sole gradually assumes the aspect of a Polyphemus outwitted — outwitted and humiliated to the point of not even being able to throw things after his tormentor. Clever cat! Nobody else's cat could have done such a thing. We should like to celebrate the Rape of the Dover Sole in Latin verse.

As for the Achillean sort of prowess, we do not demand it of a cat, but we are proud of it when it exists. There is a pleasure in seeing strange cats fly at his approach, either in single file over the wall or in the scattered aimlessness of a bursting bomb. Theoretically, we hate him to fight, but if he does fight and comes home with a torn ear, we have to summon up all the resources of our finer nature in order not to rejoice on noticing that the cat next door looks as though it had been through a railway accident.

I am sorry for the cat next door. I hate him so, and it must be horrible to be hated. But he should not sit on my wall and look at me with yellow eyes. If his eyes were any other color — even the blue that is now said to be the mark of the runaway husband — I feel certain I could just manage to endure him. But they are the sort of

yellow eyes that you expect to see looking out at you from a hole in the paneling, in a novel by Mr. Sax Rohmer. The only reason why I am not frightened of them is that the cat is so obviously frightened of me. I never did him any injury, unless to hate is to injure. But he lowers his head when I appear as though he expected to be guillotined. He does not run away; he merely crouches like a guilty thing. Perhaps he remembers how often he has stepped delicately over my seed-beds, but not so delicately as to leave no mark of ruin among the infant lettuces and the less-than-infant autumn-sprouting broccoli. These things I could forgive him, but it is not easy to forgive him the look in his eyes when he watches a bird at its song. They are ablaze with evil. He becomes a sort of Jack the Ripper at the opera.

People tell us that we should not blame cats for this sort of thing — that it is their nature and so forth. They even suggest that a cat is no more cruel in eating a robin than we are cruel ourselves in eating chicken. This seems to me to be quibbling. In the first place, there is a great difference between a robin and a chicken. In the second place, we are willing to share our chicken with the cat — at least, we are willing to share the skin and such of the bones as are not required for soup. Besides, a cat has not the same need of delicacies as a human being. It can eat, and even digest, anything. It can eat the black skin of filleted plaice. It can eat the bits of gristle that people leave on the side of their plates. It can eat boiled cod. It can eat New Zealand mutton. There is no reason why an animal with so undiscriminating a palate should demand songbirds for its food, when even human beings, who are fairly unscrupulous eaters, have agreed in some degree to abstain from them.

On reflection, however, I doubt if it is his appetite for birds that makes the cat with the yellow eyes feel guilty.

If you were able to talk to him in his own language, and thunder out your accusations against him as a bird-eater, he would probably be merely puzzled and look on you as a crank. If you pursued the argument and compelled him to moralize his position, he would, I fancy, explain that birds were very wicked creatures and that their cruelties to the worms and insects were more than flesh and blood could stand. He would work himself up into a generous idealization of himself as the guardian of law and order amid the bloody strife of the cabbage-patch — the preserver of the balance of nature. If cats were as clever as we, they would compile an atrocities-bluebook about worms. Alas, poor thrush, with how bedraggled a reputation you would come through such an exposure! With how Hunnish a tread you would be depicted treading the lawn, sparing neither age nor sex, seizing the infant worm as it puts out its head to take its first bewildered peep at the rolling sun!

Cats could write sonnets on such a theme. . . . Then there is that other beautiful potential poem: The Cry of the Snail. . . . How tender-hearted cats are! Their sympathy seems to be all but universal, always on the lookout for an object, ready to extend itself anywhere where it is needed, except, of course, to their victims. Yellow eyes or not, I begin to be persuaded that the cat next door is a noble fellow. It may well be that his look as I pass is a look not of fear but of repulsion. He has seen me going out among the worms with a sharp — no, not a very sharp — spade, and regards me as no better than an ogre. If I could only explain to him! But I shall never be able to do so. He could no more appreciate my point of view about worms than I can appreciate his about robins. Luckily, we both eat chicken. This may help us to understand one another.

On the other hand, part of the fascination of cats may

be due to the fact that it is so difficult to come to an understanding with them. A man talks to a horse or a dog as to an equal. To a cat he has to be deferential as though it had some Sphinx-like quality that baffled him. He cannot order a cat about with the certainty of being obeyed. He cannot be sure that, if he speaks to it, it will even raise its eyes. If it is perfectly comfortable, it will not. A cat is obedient only when it is hungry or when it takes the fancy. It may be a parasite, but it is never a servant. The dog does your bidding, but you do the cat's. At the same time, the contrast between the cat and the dog has often been exaggerated by dog-lovers. They tell you stories of dogs that remained with their dead masters, as though there were no fidelity in cats. It was only the other day, however, that the newspapers gave an account of a cat that remained with its murdered mistress in the most faithful tradition of the dogs.

I know, again, of cats that will go out for a walk with a human fellow-creature, as dogs do. I have frequently seen a lady walking across Hampstead Heath with a cat in train. When you go for a walk with a dog, however, the dog protects you: when you go for a walk with a cat, you feel that you are protecting the cat. It is strange that the cat should have imposed the myth of its helplessness on us. It is an animal with an almost boundless capacity for self-help. It can jump up walls. It can climb up trees. It can run, as the proverb says, like "greased lightning." It is armed like an African chief. Yet it has contrived to make itself a pampered pet, so that we are alarmed if it attempts to follow us out of the gate into a world of dogs, and only feel happy when it is purring — rolling on its back and purring as we rub its Adam's apple — by the fireside.

There is nothing that gives a greater sense of comfort than the purring of a cat. It is the most flattering music in nature. One feels, as one listens, like the humble lover

in a bad novel, who says, "You do, then, like me — a little — after all?" The fact that a cat is not utterly miserable in one's presence always, apparently, comes with the freshness and delight of a surprise. The happiness of a crowing baby, newly introduced to us, may be still more flattering, but a cat will get round people who cannot tolerate babies.

It is all the more to be wondered at that a cat, which is such a master of this conversational sort of music, should ever attempt any other. There was never an animal less fit to be a singer. Someone — was it Cowper? — has said that there are no really ugly voices in nature, and that he could imagine that there was something to be said even for the donkey's bray. I should have thought that the beautiful voices in nature were few, and that most of them could be defended only on the ground of some pleasant association. Humanity, at least, has been unanimous in its condemnation of the cat as a part of nature's chorus. Poems have been written in praise of the corn crake as a singer, but never of the cat. All the associations we have with cats have not accustomed us to that discordant howl. It converts love itself into a torment such as can be found only in the pages of a twentieth-century novel. In it we hear the jungle decadent — the beast in dissolution, but not yet civilized. When it rises at night outside the window, we always explain to visitors: "No, that's not Peter. That's the cat next door with the yellow eyes." The man who will not defend the honor of his cat cannot be trusted to defend anything.

LAPPA OFFICINALIS, VAR. MAJOR

JOSEPH EDGAR CHAMBERLIN

A VERY wonderful plant, whose broad, rich leaves took possession even in April of many waste places, cropping up in the crevices at the base of brick apartment-houses, covering vacant lots, springing up jauntily in the space between the sidewalk and the curbstone, has already almost reached its perfection of leafage, though its pretty purple flowers have not yet appeared. The Nomad refers to the well-known *Lappa officinalis*, var. *major:* otherwise, the common burdock. There are few more magnificent or cheerful plants in existence than the burdock, and the Nomad is glad to pay it a hearty tribute of admiration. As soon as the snow is gone it comes out of the ground in all neglected nooks and corners, never asking for any sort of protection or cultivation. Its big leaves actually seem to appear over night. A plant that, when fully grown, will look like a young forest, will come up in the crevice between two bricks, and if the bricks do not afford it enough room it will push them out of the way. Its leaves somewhat resemble those of the rhubarb, for which it is mistaken by unfortunate city children. It also bears a broad general resemblance to the tobacco plant. But it is good for nothing except its looks, and even those, though quite splendid, are not appreciated by a good many people who think of the burrs that it is going to put forth in the fall, which will stick to one's clothes, and the coats of sheep, dogs, and other unsuspecting animals — which will even get into the hair of children, and make all sorts of trouble.

But because the burdock springs up so spontaneously,

it must not be supposed that it will grow in any sort of soil. That is not at all the case. The burdock is rather particular about its soil. It wants it rich, and you can't get the soil too rich for it. The reason why it springs up in the crevice between the sidewalk and the brick houses is that rich and mellow soil — well-fertilized dust from the street, and that sort of thing — accumulates in such places. It is partial to vacant lots, because rich bits of rubbish go to decay on such lots. The burdock scorns barren and stony soil. It despises all kinds of usefulness. Like the cat, it exists for itself alone; it is a plant that walks by itself. It may be born to blush unseen on the edge of some dust heap behind an old forgotten shed; it does not care, but attains its most glorious perfection there — just for itself alone. It may, on the other hand, take entire possession of a vacant lot fronting on Beacon Street; it does not mind that either, but behaves just exactly as it would out behind the country barn; its contempt of the gentility around it is perfect. It goes everywhere; you will find it rioting about the ruins of some long-disused old lumber-camp in the farthest Maine woods. Great city or lonely backwoods, it is all the same to the burdock: give it its spot of rich and mellow mould, and it performs the same glorious old stunt of self-celebration. Its good springs from itself alone: it is the self-esteem-made vegetable.

Somehow the Nomad has always thought that Walt Whitman should not have called his poems *Leaves of Grass:* he should have named them "Burdocks." They are so self-reliant, so self-contained, so richly self-expressing, so utterly careless of respectability! Every leaf of the plant says "I". The blossoms are pretty and purple. A spray of them in their perfection is worth plucking and keeping in a vase, it is so smart and confident. The fierce burr that will follow seems inherent in the flowers' sturdy

bunchiness. And when each burr finally appears, it is quite sure that it is the centre of the universe. All things must adhere to it, and believe in it, whether they want to or not. It wanders abroad, lying in wait for you, and when it has touched you it will never let go of you. Pick it to shreds, and some of it will be left, to hang on to you to the last. It will, if you don't look out, travel with you from Boston to Los Angeles or Miami, and be all ready to start a new generation there. It traveled to this country from Europe, from Asia, in the first place. It must have grown in the Garden of Eden. The botanical name, *Lappa*, is Greek, and signifies that it holds on to you. It must have bothered Diogenes in his tub — with his general frowsiness — horribly. But no doubt he liked it. With all its selfishness and adhesiveness, the burdock is a most likable old ruffian of a plant.

ART AND LIFE

RINGING THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

H. J. M.

It is said that our age is one of superabundant poetic fertility, and judging by the number of poets and the number of articles written about them, it must be true. Traveling home in the District Railway, in a coagulated swarm of fellow beings, one swivels one's eyes round (the only objects that can move) and wonders how many of them don't write poems. It is even rumored that some poets actually live by and on their poetry and that this year's winner of the Hawthornden prize writes two poems every evening, which, calculating the average productivity of a writer at a generation, works out (omitting leap years) at 18,250 poems, and, live he as long as Wordsworth, would mean that if the words that rhyme were strung together in a line they would stretch from the *Nation* office to Wapping Old Stairs. Some months ago the poem of another poet was advertised as containing some hundreds of lines, as though that settled the matter. The expression "poetic fertility" is not then used without due caution, for just as the oyster produces (if I remember rightly without looking it up) some 60,000,000 ova, and there are a great number of mature oysters, so almost all the poets of the age create dense multitudes of poems, and there are a great number of poets.

But I do not believe that our age is at all remarkable for poetic quality. If anything, I should say that fewer real poems have been written since the opening of the century than in the twenty preceding years. The conception of what poetry really is seems to me, in the first place, to be wrong. Poetry should be an activity that every poet

should religiously avoid performing unless he cannot possibly help it; and if he cannot possibly help it, his set of rhymes stands a very good chance of being a poem. I used to write poems myself a long time ago, and I broke myself successfully of the habit, partly because it did not seem worth while writing middling verses for no particular reason. I realize now that I did not write these poems because I was compelled to write them, and that that was the reason why they were just middling verses. Without conceit, I believe that one of the reasons why I gave up writing poems was because I had too much respect for poetry. When, therefore, I hear or read that such and such a journal is good because it encourages young poets to dispose of their wares, personal experience as well as opinion makes that statement unintelligible. Discouragement appears to me the proper word.

It may be said that I do not recognize a real poem when I see one. But everybody with a fairly clear head, and not too much nonsense about him, recognizes a real poem as inevitably and with as much assurance as he recognizes the first swallow in April. Out of such recognitions has Time become the best critic who ever lived. As a set-off against the sham poems that we read, the world is full of fine poems which we live and it is the purpose of our lives to act, see, and feel. The story of the fight against the Central European famine, of the man who was drowned in trying to save a dog, of him who will not be sold, and of her who will give her all, what glorious poems are these!

> The song of all, both high and low,
> To some blest vision true,
> The song of beggars when they throw
> The crust of pity all men owe
> To hungry sparrows in the snow,
> Old beggars hungry too —
> And alleluias sweet and clear
> And wild with beauty men mis-hear,

> From choirs of song as near and dear
> To Paradise as they;
> The everlasting pipe and flute
> Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
> And lips deaf men imagine mute
> In wood and stone and clay.

Coming out of a narrow lane one day last year I saw a flycatcher sitting motionless at the extreme tip of a dead branch at the top of a tall decayed larch, the white breast thrown full out into the beams of the sun. The little creature was like a globe of dew, suffused with light, and here was an aged and dying tree, surrendering its soul to heaven in a ball of liquid light suspended upon its topmost and deadest twig. I came out of the same lane this year, and there round the corner was a silver birch, an ash loaded down with brilliant orange clusters of little grapes, and between the two trees a cow with a pelt of a uniform deep indigo. To find two poems in one place was as remarkable as two poems in one book of modern verse, but (granted the two poems in the book) the recognition was the same. They happened by an extraordinarily lucky accident, but they took shape from the beginning of the world and were for everlasting. They were religious, as every genuine poem is and must by its nature be. One might say that the only test of a poem is whether it can "ring the bells of heaven," and of its reader, whether it can make him hear them. The one is good security for the other.

We all know that poetry is not written nowadays as an importunate necessity that will not be denied, a something a man reveals out of his clamoring soul in wonder, trembling, and delight, and communicates to the world as the news of some great benefit granted to men, of which he, the poet, has had the supreme good fortune to be the postman. Poetry is a matter of urban journalism, a means to reputation, a group activity in which the mutual aid of

the several members of the group will guarantee the poet from the cold blasts of an unfriendly outside, an apprenticeship to a career — anything but a fulfilment for its own sake alone, a response to an imperative demand, a loyalty "to some blest vision." It is also hedged round with a mass of academic restrictions and negations. A poem must not be "moral", — as though, being an exercise of pure disinterestedness, it could be anything else, — it must not be rhyme, it must not be synthetic and have relations with other modes of creative effort, it must eschew knowledge, it must not be understood by all, it must not convey a "message" of any kind, it must be so specialized as to avoid all natural contacts with life and nature and men; and so on. It is not wonderful that the poet who sits down to write half a column for next week's issue of the *Poets' Friend*, with his bluebook of taboos and formulas before him, and the assurance of three columns of appreciation from the *Poets' Companion* and the *Poets' Patron*, as well as the *Poets' Friend*, when the half-column becomes a page in the forthcoming book (only nine more poems to write), should not write poems. I do not believe that any of the poems of the past we all recognize as great would pass muster before the rigorous exclusions of modern poetic values; and the real wonder is that there should still be a few poems here and there which happen as the flycatcher and the cow happened, and a poet or so here and there cleaning up the stain on one of the panes of the dome of life to admit the white radiance of eternity.

The definitions of poetry are many, but few wide enough. We, the non-poets for whom the poets write — or ought to write — in order to teach us something we do not know, have a right to be exacting. We seek from the reading of poems to become (in the widest sense) better men, to understand something more of the meaning of life, to feel the individual character of the poet, to realize quite clearly

what it is that he has seen and believes, to respond to the same impulse and emotion which moved him and to say to ourselves — this is just, right, and as true as it is beautiful. We ordinary folk have a hard job to hear the bells of heaven — it is the duty of the poet, whether he write in verse or in prose or by his deeds, to play the bell-ringer for us.

A DAYDREAM

DAVID MANNES

Along Fifth Avenue, on a cold, blustering day not long ago, I passed many churches, most of them with doors closed. The only information they gave to the passer-by was the bulletin board on which were pasted the announcements of next Sunday's attractions and the texts of sermons, sensational in style and obviously so worded as to attract the unwilling churchgoer.

I came upon one church that had an air of usefulness about it; for people in every walk of life were quietly going up its few stone steps in seriousness of purpose, with none of the manner of the conventional Sunday church-gathering, which is more or less interested in the clothes and behavior of others. The doors were wide open; a notice on the usual bulletin board said, simply: —

An Hour Daily for Rest and Meditation from 12 to 1

I went in also. The first view of the vestibule was startling, for in spaces along the walls between the entrance doors were many bookshelves with books in every conceivable color and binding. Partitioned off in groups was a library of philosophers. There were works of Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Aristotle, and Plato, and, of course, various editions of the Bible. There were also the writings of the poet-philosophers — Shakespeare, Browning, Walt Whitman, and others. People were choosing these volumes without the assistance of a librarian: in fact, no attendant or guard was in sight. The people would take the books of their choice into the church proper to read. During my stay in the foyer I felt and heard the power of a glorious

organ playing something I did not know, perhaps an old Bach choral. Then, as I went in quietly with others, I saw, to my amazement, that nearly every pew was filled with what I should say represented a cross section of the human life of the great city. Men and women, head workers and manual laborers of every race and creed, sat silently, some bent over books, others resting their heads on the back of their pews in utter relaxation and in utter individualism, consciously alone, but unconsciously taking part in unified thought. There was no sign of movement in the chancel; no sound but that of the organ. This music, without programme, impersonal, unsensational in the finer and subtler sense, was sensational in its quieting effect on the spirit.

I saw that it was 12.45 o'clock. People were leaving quietly, and soon there remained only a few, evidently those who could afford to stay and rest. At one o'clock all was silent. I went forward, intending to find out, if possible, the origin of this most wonderful service. In the organ loft I saw the organist closing the console of the organ, preparing to leave.

"Are you here every day at this time?" I asked him.

"Yes," he replied, "every day throughout the year."

"Whose idea is this? Who ever thought of doing this wonderful thing?"

"It's everybody's idea. Everybody wanted it. — I wanted it," he went on, "perhaps more than many. I simply had the opportunity to put a dream into actual life. After all, most beautiful dreams come true. We are the creators of existence; we make life what it is. We make all the awful mess of it, the lying and hypocrisy, the war — oh, the war of it! We could make our dreams come true; instead, we make our worst terrors come truer than terror itself, just because we do not believe."

"Believe in what?" I asked.

"Just believe. No human being believes in horror. No,

no one. And it is only our faint-heartedness in our first and finest convictions which makes possible the destruction of reverence for each other and reverence for the nobility in ourselves. When that goes, little by little, through trading our birthright of divinity for the wreck we have made of our existence, we must have recurrent upheavals of the worst in us; and war, more fearful, more horrible than imagination can picture, is the outcome."

"How can you, a young man, feel all this?" I asked him curiously, for he seemed merely a boy, though he must have been twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

He was quiet for a moment, looking off somewhere not in the line of actual vision.

"As an organist I came to this church in 1913," he began. "I had studied the organ here, and later in France with a wonderful master. I played, and I conceived my duties here to be merely those of a professional organist, and life was good to me. As a very young man I neither felt deeply nor thought deeply, although I imagined I did. I held my rehearsals, I conducted the musical part of the service in strict accordance with what I conceived to be my professional duty. I was quite satisfied with everything, just as we all are when things go smoothly.

"Then, in 1914, Belgium was invaded; Louvain was sacked; cathedrals were destroyed and homes ravaged. I woke up from a selfish dream, waited and waited for my country to declare war. I waited until I could delay no longer, and then enlisted as a private in the British service, fought in France, was wounded, and fought again. And then I knew — knew so well — that our philosophy of living was wrong, wrong as the devil in us is wrong, and I knew that even the Church had failed, miserably and completely, for it was not human, it was not liberal, and it was not universal. It was professional — I mean commercially professional — and this professionalism, like the

same poison in the practice of medicine, law, education, or music, could only end in stagnation. Behind our dreams there must be a universal and practical understanding between one individual and another; but this Tower of Babel, professionalism, increasing in height in the sky, threatened finally to blot out the sun of understanding forever. The Church had become merely a symbol, and the very fact that it was worshiped only as such proved that the power of its mind had departed. It had become atrophied. It no longer bound mankind together. But there must be, — there was to be, — the link at hand, the bond of a love common to all the inhabitants of the earth — music. And music, like the Church itself, must be harnessed to its real load. It must rid itself of intellectual snobbery and professional shortsightedness. — I have sinned, and am only trying to do penance."

All this time there had been no word of the Redeemer; and yet here was one who was following, afar off, this very old and very cold trail.

"How did this church allow you to do this?" I asked.

"Since 1918 I have pleaded and pleaded for the privilege, and at last I was allowed to do this without announcing the fact other than by the small notice you saw outside. At first a few came, out of curiosity. The gathering you saw to-day is of two months' growth. In a year other churches must follow. And then, think of it! To know that at noontime, between twelve and one, every day, all our churches are filled, and the synagogues, too! Then we shall know that our material investment in the churches is bearing a divine (and when I say divine I mean human) interest which will compound itself so wonderfully that, well — " and here he suddenly stopped.

Finally I broke the silence: "And the books outside, in the foyer?"

"Oh," he said, "I put a few there myself; then I was

given gradually, week by week, many others from people who possessed them but never read them."

"Are they never stolen?"

"No," he replied. "Sometimes they disappear for a week or two. Then they come back. I am glad when this happens, for then I know that they are cared for."

"Does n't the music interfere with the reading?" I asked.

"Yes; but it should; for a line of the philosophers is enough for contemplation for some time. And those with whom music interferes in prolonged reading — but then, look!"

And I saw, through the grille of the choir-screen, dotted here and there, about fifty people reading.

"Sometimes they remain like that for hours," he explained. "We never close the doors."

FOLK SONGS

ERNEST NEWMAN

THE musical critic may, and generally does, use bad language about London and its music, and especially about the quantity of the latter being, as a rule, in excess of its quality; but he is really never so happy anywhere else. I agree with Dr. Johnson in his snubbing of someone who said he was tired of London: "Sir, the man who is tired of London is tired of life." I had to spend all the week before this last in Glasgow. Under ordinary circumstances that would have given rise to regrets. But at Glasgow I was one of the judges in the Competition Festival; and while these festivals have always an interest of their own, those in Scotland have a peculiar fascination for me. It is there that I hear some of the loveliest folk songs the world possesses, and realize what a part folk-music can play in the life of an imaginative race.

There has been so much nonsense talked about folk-music, and so little sense, that the subject has become perhaps the most tiresome one in the whole range of musical argument. There is really no reason why it should be that. To see the matter as it actually is, we have only to rid our minds of two root-fallacies in connection with it that have made it the nuisance it now is to most musicians. The first fallacy is that the "folk" ever made or ever could make, a folk song or a ballad or anything else. The "folk" must have been, two hundred or two thousand years ago, precisely what they are to-day — a collection of average intelligences, with a fair number of dunderheads among them and an exceptional brain here and there. To tell us that average people or dunderheads could create an

immortal melody by the simple process of all taking a hand in it is to make too tall a demand on our credulity.

I cannot improve on Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's pithy advice to the innocents who subscribe to this theory: If you really think the "folk" can make a fine poem, call a public meeting and try. The fine poems and fine melodies, like everything else that is fine in art, can have been made only by the fine spirits. Even under modern conditions, with Europe one community, and with every opportunity for genius to reveal itself, the number of first-rate melodists in any decade can easily be counted on the fingers of both hands. So it must always have been, surely, under the law of averages. The best of the old folk songs can have been made only by men who had the natural endowment of a Schubert or a Wolf; and such men must always have been few and far between. I was very glad to find Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch suggesting that most of the finest British ballads may have been written by one or two unknown men who lived somewhere between the Forth and the Tyne, and between 1350 and 1550.

I find in this theory a support for my own theory with regard to certain folk songs, especially those that are found only in one restricted area. I have always had the feeling, for instance, that the best of those incomparable Hebridean folk songs that Mrs. Kennedy Fraser has collected must have been the work of one obscure singer of rare genius. The law of averages is against the emergence of more than one or two supreme lyrists in a century in modern Europe. It must have been equally against it in the Hebrides of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

If we dispose of the fallacy of the communal origin of the folk song, we automatically dispose of the fallacy of the founding of a national school of music on folk song. If it could be proved that these songs were the product of the "soul of the race," there might be some reason for

taking them as our models. (It would necessitate the assumption that the "soul of the race" remains the same in the course of many centuries; but a little difficulty of that sort would be blandly taken by the folk-music theorists in their stride.) If, however, the great songs were the work of a great unknown individual, they are the expression simply and solely of his own personality and experiences; and there is no more reason why we should try to found ourselves upon him than upon any composer whose name appears in the biographical dictionaries.

The great folk-composer sang because he must: that is the only excuse for any composer singing to-day, and his own "must" can have no more dependence on that of the composer of An Eriskay Love-Lilt or The Miller of the Dee than it can on Bach or Wagner. If, then, I am thrilled, as I always am at the Glasgow Festival, by the singing of the lovely Scots folk songs by some of the competitors and the audience, it is not because I think that these songs will or can or should have the slightest influence on the Scottish composer of the present or the future. Their value to us is simply the value of any supremely beautiful thing. They are what they are because their composers had no thought of schools or theories or traditions; because they sang out of the fullness of their own hearts. There is no other recipe for first-rate singing to-day.

An experience such as that at Glasgow teaches us a good deal that we are apt to miss in the ordinary round of concert-going. In the first place, we realize how thoroughly good a work has to be to bear manifold repetition. When a song has been sung some forty, or even twenty, times in succession, its weaknesses become cruelly apparent. A thing like one of the arias from *Samson and Delilah* cannot stand it; after the fourth or fifth hearing the fundamental commonness of soul that dictated it simply rises at you

and knocks you down. Even some of the accredited masterpieces of men like Brahms will not bear the repetition they get at these festivals. But any one of the great folk songs seems only more wonderful after a score of successive hearings; and then one realizes the genius that must have gone to the making of them. It would be interesting to put some twenty of the leading composers of the present day to the same test — give them six, or at the most eight, notes, and tell them to write an unaccompanied melody that shall be one of the consummate, immortal things of music, as many of these old Scottish songs are. I sometimes sit lost in wonder at the terrific concentration that some of these songs exhibit. It is not merely that the tune is pleasant to the ear; if that were all there is to it, a thousand composers could come through the test to-morrow. What gives the great folk song its unquenchable vitality is that it is the concentration into a few notes of a thousand of the deepest human experiences. We meet with the same phenomenon, as I have lately been saying, in the motives of the later Wagner; each of them limns a character or expresses a mood once and for all. In the best of these Scottish folk songs we feel that it is the very quintessence of tenderness or heroism or mysticism that is being distilled for us.

And a further reflection always follows. The greatest music can never be anything else than melodic. Richness of harmony will avail nothing if the melody be not the real thing. It is the melody that is ultimately the carrier of the idea; and it is in the difference between one melody and another that the difference between one mind and another, or between the functioning of the same mind at different times, is inexorably made manifest. You may bluff as you will in all other respects; there can be no bluffing here. The melody is the soul of the music, because it is the soul of the composer; it reveals or betrays what he

is as surely as the voice or the eyes or the mouth do. You may dress a Saint-Saens melody in the richest harmonic garments you can rake together from all the wardrobes of the century, but the vulgarian in it will still betray itself in a hundred little ways; while you have only to listen to a melody of Mozart or of a great folk-singer to know that the soul of this man was simple, and lovable, and clean.

BASEBALL AND ARTISTS

RICHARD C. CABOT

In the name of informality the guests at a large club-dinner (with a presiding officer and speeches to follow) are sometimes left to seat themselves. Some sad and embarrassing moments follow. The presiding officer finds his chair of honor and there he stands alone, gazing wistfully at the rest of the company, as they place themselves at so respectful a distance from him that empty chairs, half a dozen or more on each side, are his only support. Respect for greatness turns out to mean the painful isolation of greatness, until at last some one takes pity on the unfortunate great or is ruefully begged to move up and be neighborly.

So it is with the "fine arts." A society should be formed to alleviate their cruel isolation. In the first place, more amateurs are needed. What would not our painters and sculptors give for such unfeigned interest, such discriminating approval and criticism as is daily shouted out by thousands of spectators to those happy and unconscious artists, the "Red Sox," the "Cubs," and the "Giants." A baseball audience is made up of enthusiastic amateurs, a considerable fraction of whom are confident that they "could have made that play far better." To get such audiences for ordinary artists every one should be brought up to paint and to play some musical instrument, as all boys are brought up to play baseball. We know that very few of the children who learn writing in our schools will ever reach any greater literary distinction than the composition of a good letter. But we do not, therefore, give up teaching them to write. Neither should we fail to teach children

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painting merely because we know that only one or two in a million will ever get beyond the pleasures and appreciations of the amateur. The fine arts are now treated as an aristocratic affair, an occupation for fastidious and delicate souls. So we think of them, so we treat them. Are we not brutally imposing those misconceptions upon the unfortunate and struggling artist? Are we not forcing him to play a part that is utterly foreign to his nature? I think so. For art, I think, is as full-blooded and dashing a pursuit as fox-hunting or football. The artist differs from you and me chiefly because he is more alive. He burns; we smoulder. Everybody is slowly burning up in the fire of physiological metabolism. What we call "fire" is simply a bit of creation where the forces of life burn a little faster, a little hotter and more beautifully than in human tissues. Were there more realization of this among us there would be less "patronizing," and more love of the fine arts.

But there are many to plead the cause of the fine arts, and the popular arts (baseball, dancing, and drama) need no amateur eulogist since the magazines began to do them justice. My chief concern is with the minor arts, such as humor and good humor, and especially with some of the simplest among them — speaking, gesticulating, letter-writing, seeing beauty in common things or putting it there, anticipating another's wish, threading one's way deftly in a crowded street, steering a discussion into profitable channels.

The major games and the finer arts are arranged to fill up any space that may be left in or after a working-day. They come at stated hours; we leave our jobs and our homes to attend them. Doubtless this must always be so with the more heroic and permanent forms of art. We cannot carve statues while waiting on customers. But some of the humbler and less celebrated forms of art can penetrate every place and irradiate every hour.

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ACTORS AND APPLAUSE

A. G. WALKLEY

THERE has been some correspondence in the newspapers of late protesting against the players' practice of coming forward at the end of each act to acknowledge the applause of the audience. It is urged that the dramatic illusion is thereby marred or destroyed. The players, if they must bow their acknowledgments, ought to wait until the end of the play. Surely this is to demand either too much or too little? If the illusion of the scene is to be preserved intact the actors ought not to be allowed to show themselves out of character at any moment, final as well as intermediate. And every other breach of illusion ought to be abolished. There should be no bustle or chatter or orchestral music in the intermissions, which should be passed in complete darkness and in silent meditation. There should be neither applause nor hisses; for these are signs that the audience has temporarily lost its sense of illusion and is distinguishing between the actor and his personage. These conditions, I may remark, are already satisfied at the picture-houses. Perhaps that is a hitherto unsuspected reason for their popularity — the inviolate purity of their illusion.

Yet the spoken drama retains the advantage of human nature — live flesh and blood. The present protestants must enjoy these elements with the rest of us, and, enjoying them, they must put up with them too — put up with the human impulse to applaud on one side of the curtain and to respond with immediate smiles on the other side. This sense of human companionship in the theatre, of reciprocal attraction between the public and the players,

seems to me of its very essence. The complainants would sever the connection. If the stupid public will break the illusion by applauding, then the players must "larn it to be a toad" by loftily ignoring the applause. Fancy asking players, of all people, — so sensitive, so dependent for their histrionic success on applause, so grateful for it when it comes, — for this feat of philosophic detachment!

That the players court and foster the applause, not without a certain artfulness, we all know. We know the curious influence of the turned-down lights on the applauding multitude: how the salvos tend automatically to repeat themselves until the lights go up. We know the little ways of the actors in taking the applause — the beckoning to an absentee at the wings, the affected embarrassment of the leading actor at finding himself inexplicably left alone on the stage. We know, in short, what is common knowledge, that in their own persons they must still be acting. But that is only an additional, and not unpleasing, touch of human nature. And in the long run, even supposing that there is a breach in the continuity of the illusion, the applause does much more good than harm. Nay, it is indispensable. Without it, there would be an end of acted drama. Actors simply cannot play to an unappreciative house. Yet, when the house does respond, the present doubters would condemn the actors to be unresponsive. What would they say in an Italian theatre, where an actor applauded for a speech pauses to bow his thanks in the middle of the action? I remember that when Duse was playing Francesca da Rimini in London the Paolo of the occasion frequently interrupted the action in this way. On the other hand, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries our audiences were in the habit of crying "Off! Off!" to an actor who displeased them. They valued good art more than continuity of illusion.

And, really, is n't this argument from illusion rather a

mare's nest? Are our minds so inelastic that the delight of the balcony scene and the anticipation of the rest of *Romeo and Juliet* are spoiled for us because Mr. Brown in Romeo's clothes and Miss Jones in Juliet's appear before us in the interval, to respond to our applause? We are not children. Illusion for us is not delusion. We are there to see Romeo and his lady-love, and to fall under the spell of their poetry and romance, but we are also there to appreciate the skill of Mr. Brown and Miss Jones in acting their parts. While the performance is afoot, we distinguish subconsciously between the player and the personage. May we not in the intervals of the performance distinguish consciously?

A suggestion has been made that is really an attempt at compromise between the two mental states. It is that when the act-drop has been raised in response to applause the action of the scene should be continued in some plausible way, but in dumb show. Some Victorian dramatists — Tom Robertson, for instance — actually provided stage-directions for these "encore scenes." The expedient strikes me as puerile. If we were merely applauding the play it might do. But at the act-drop we are applauding the players. And, for my part, to see them frankly coming forward to acknowledge our applause (as the players that we all know them to be) does not in the least hinder my resumption of illusion over the play when the curtain goes up again.

I say "for my part," because, after all, the degree of illusion in the theatre is largely a subjective matter. *Quot homines, tot* theatrical illusions. The two extremes, absolute illusion and absolute non-illusion, I have before now illustrated by the cases of Sir Roger de Coverley at *The Distressed Mother* and Tolstoi at *Siegfried*. To Sir Roger, the widow in the play was as real as the widow who plagued him in actual life. To Tolstoi, Siegfried was a

person whose abdominal development betrayed the actor and who used a hammer as no one really uses a hammer. Probably either extreme is rare in a London playhouse. But there are always two parties there — the people who come to be illuded by the play and the people who come to "follow" their favorite players. The followers communicate their satisfaction to the followed by clapping the palms of their hands together, and at the noise these others express their satisfaction by bowing and smiling. It may seem absurd, but it is very human. The exasperated illusionists write to the papers. But "with such a being as man, in such a world as the present one," they will, I fear, have written in vain.

THE FIRST PLAY

GILBERT EMERY

It was in the Town Hall. Oh, not this Town Hall here, with its pale chastenesses and maidenly refinements, but ours — a great, bleak, dusty rectangle, filled with penitential wooden settees, lighted by malodorous kerosene lamps, fitfully heated by two voracious wood-stoves. Nailed on the entrance-doors was a peremptory sign: "You that were born in a sawmill, shut the door, for you are not at home now." At the upper end of this naked room, if room it could be called, was a little shallow, high-waisted stage vaguely illuminated by a row of "foots" — sullen lamps behind green-painted tin half-circles. There was no dressing-room. Why should there be, when one could quite simply and naturally dress on the floor below, in the tax-collector's room and the office of the justice of the peace, and then dash up the dangerous stairs for an entrance?

Yes, it was in the Town Hall. I mean, of course, the first play I ever saw. (You can't have forgotten yours; don't tell me that!) Life may hold great adventure and much radiant dream; argosies may sail forth; beautiful, bewildering maidens appeal for rescue and love — I know not what; but the wonder of it all is as naught compared to the glamour of the first play. Play! As I write the word, the significance of the term strikes me for the first time. Play! Even now, after all these years there is often little more of play in the brief enchanting hour of the theatre than there was in that immemorial performance which swept me tumultuously into the world of make-believe. No, no — it was reality, delightful, deathless reality; and the humdrum life beyond the guarded doors was the play.

Well, well — I was seven, and the son of a pious mother. Why on earth she ever consented to let me go, in the keeping of a faithful, fanciful spinster — as childlike as I, I suspect — to this "show" (we called them all shows in those days), I cannot now imagine, for the theatre was to her a sinful business, and "The Black Crook" was abroad in the land. But go I did — and of a Saturday afternoon.

No one in the village had ever before conceived of the notion of shutting out the good daylight, and in a silly semblance of night sitting down to the fascinating entertainment. If you were going to have it in the daytime, said the village, why pretend it was nightfall? All the same, green cambric was tacked over the windows and the smelly footlights were kindled. Allie, my protectress, and I arrived long, long before the appointed hour, took our pick of seats, watched the spectators shamble in, dispose themselves advantageously, whistle, catcall, giggle, eat, scrape the benches horribly on the floor, and, despite the disingenuous sign on the wall: "Gentlemen will not and others must not spit on the floor," even spit. I little dreamed then, though I see it clearly now, that I was on the eve (or perhaps the afternoon) of the most eventful moment of my life. All I knew was that when that ridiculous little painted curtain — plotted out so brightly with the advertisements of our tradesmen — went up, I was plunged straightway into a world the like of which I had never imagined, and whose enchantment still compels me.

And the play? Ah, it was *East Lynne.*

I never hear now "When other lips and other hearts" without vividly living over that afternoon. What was it to me that the beautiful Isobel Vane was a large obsolescent lady who, for reasons best known to herself, elected to enact the entire play in a pale-blue silk dress? Or that her disguise on her tragic return consisted only of an ingenuous white cotton-wool wig and blue-glass spectacles?

Allie and I wept, and shuddered, and laughed, and cried out in alarm, for we were children in the real world of the theatre, as, after all, all audiences are.

Very likely that stock company must have been the worst in the world. It was certainly very bad, else it would never have stormed our out-of-the-way, railroadless little town. But, as for me, I shall never again see such magical players as those. They stayed with us for a rich fantastic week, during which time they graciously gave us *Capitola, the Madcap: or, the Hidden Hand; Pauline, Lady of Lyons; Hazel Kirk; My Uncle From Cattaraugus,* and I have forgotten what else of wonder and art. Bless them, all of them, those dear, delightful artists! They took us out of a dull, homely, provincial village, and suddenly showed us true love, and sorrow, and laughter, and all the kingdoms of the imagination.

DRAMA *versus* FILM

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

THE ever-growing popularity of the film, its sweeping capture of our millions of amusement-seekers, prompts an inquiry into the relations of the picture-play and the spoken drama. What quality and kind of pleasure does the spoken drama give us that the film can never offer? What delights can the film provide that are beyond the reach of the drama? What separate domain of its own has each form of play, where its rival can never intrude?

The dramatist wins enduring renown by his dialogue, and by his dialogue alone. To write a successful play he must have many other gifts and acquirements besides that of writing appropriate dialogue. He must call in the scene-painter, the upholsterer, the costumier, the electrician, and other adjutants to help him to express himself. But his dialogue alone has permanent value: all the rest of his trappings are perishable. The difference between *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* and a stock melodrama is that *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* can be read and studied as literature. That is the reason they have held their place in our theatre for three hundred years. That is also the chief reason why they fail on our modern stage. They are literature. They demand serious thought and feeling from an audience. They ask for examination, and offer emotional and intellectual enjoyment on these grounds. What worse recommendation could a play have for our modern theatrical managers, and for our popularly educated audiences, than that it offers them literature and intellectual enjoyment?

It is clear, then, that the film can never afford the high-

est quality and kind of pleasure that spoken drama can give — the pleasure of literature.

Again, the voice has always been the chief gift of the actor, his chief means of swaying his audience and stirring their emotions. In the spoken drama mobile features, facial play and expression, appropriate gestures, and movements of the body are of great value. But they are the mere servants and useful companions of the voice. In the highest forms of drama, they count for little unless the total effect is harmonized by a flexible, persuasive, well-trained, manageable voice. In opera it is nearly always the singer who triumphs over the actor. The *vox humana* is an infinitely more difficult instrument to play upon than the violin. Its modulations are far more numerous and subtle, and to bring out its full music it needs a far longer and harder training.

I have watched Coquelin giving a lesson to a pupil. I wondered no longer why the poetic drama holds its place on the French stage, and why French audiences enjoy plays that contain strenuous thought and serious criticism of life. Charles Wyndham's voice had little range, but what wonderful tunes he played upon it! He told me that all through his earlier career he cultivated it and practised upon it incessantly. It is mainly by the voice that the actor gets his finest and worthiest effects. What the dramatist has written falls dead upon the stage unless it is vitalized by the actor. The present condition of our English theatre is partly due to the general neglect of voice-cultivation by our actors. Indeed, Mr. Archibald Spofforth, in his rather impertinent pamphlet, *Our Preposterous Stage*, . . . advances the plausible theory that Providence has recently developed the film "industry" with the kindly purpose of saving English actors the trouble of learning elocution. I have never been able to fathom the ways of Providence, but Mr. Spofforth's arguments seem worthy of consideration.

Be this as it may, it is clear that, as the film-play forbids the dramatist to use his chief and highest means of expression, so also it forbids the actor to use his chief and highest means of expression. It condemns them to silence, and shuts out from both of them all hope of reaching the highest summits of their legitimate ambitions.

What balancing advantages and compensations has the film to offer to the actor and the dramatist?

To the film actor and actress it offers universal, though not immortal, fame, by displaying their photographs in extraordinary attitudes in every city of the civilized world, perhaps in five hundred theatres on the same night. It further offers to star performers a salary about fifty times as great as our Minister of Education receives for educating our working-classes to avoid manual labor, or about twenty times as great as our Prime Minister before the war received for legislating in ignorance and blind indifference to our coming emergencies. With these comparisons in our minds, having regard to the respective services rendered to the country and their financial results, it will be readily allowed that the moneys paid to our star film-performers are wisely and profitably spent.

What opportunities and advantages does the film-play offer the dramatist that the spoken drama denies him?

The principles of construction are the same for both classes of play — to tell an interesting story in a progressive, concerted series of actions, so that it leaves the impression of being a concrete entity, so that you are obliged to think of it as an indivisible organism, with all its parts in living unity.

In our modern comedies and dramas we have reached a high level of constructive skill. The best examples of construction in our modern theatre exhibit workmanship as fine and dexterous as the goldsmith can show. I am not now speaking of the pre-war masterpieces of our "Theatre

of Ideas.' If a dramatist has "ideas," he need not trouble about construction, or about telling an interesting story. All that he has to do is to unload his "ideas" in a heap on the stage and leave the critics and the public to sort them out.

But if the principles of construction are the same in the film-play and in the spoken drama, their application is widely different. Our modern convention of one scene in an act, or one scene for four acts, though it is admirably suited for drawing-room comedy, is terribly cramping and repressive to the dramatist. It pins him in small corners, and forbids him to roam on large adventures.

Aristotle has discoursed on the rigid limitations of the drama, compared with the wide and varied expanses of the epic — that is, the novel. The Shakespearean convention — a dozen scenes in an act — is the only formula that allows to the drama something of the spaciousness, the freedom, range, and variety of the epic.

But, compared with the film, even the epic — the novel — shrinks into parochial dimensions and becomes a tedious and dilatory chronicler of humdrum events. The film-theatre is as wide as the world itself, as bustling and as varied. It is as universal as the "casing air." Its busy omnipresence evades all difficulties of transport. It annihilates distance and leaps across a continent more swiftly than Marconi. It takes its audiences on stranger and wilder excursions than Cook, and needs not to provide them with an interpreter, for it shows them what is understood of all men in all nations.

In the volume, variety, and impetus of its action, — that is, in the very essence of drama, — in its swift, vivid, multiple transformations, its startling command of contrast, its power of concentration on valuable minutiæ, its capacity for insinuation and flashing suggestion — in all these truly dramatic qualities the film-play offers to the

dramatist an infinitude of opportunity compared with the spoken drama.

The film is a boggler at comedy, except of the rude and boisterous kind which Thalia reproves. But the film invites and welcomes romance and imagination and opens a large field for their exploits. Now imagination, from Shakespeare downward, is largely shut out from our modern stage, with its pert vulgarities and dictionary of slang. Tongue-tied already, and almost banished from the spoken drama, imagination may perhaps find a home in the film-theatre. She will be deprived of speech, but how rarely she is allowed to open her lips upon the regular stage! May not imagination find utterance in the vast pictorial resources and devices of the film-theatre, and throw her magic beams among its fascinating lights and shadows, and employ the quick vibrations and successions of the screen to tell larger stories of human life than are being told to-day upon the stage of the spoken drama?

BOOK HUNGER

A FORTUNATE SOLDIER

Said a New Yorker to me the other day, "Books, books! I'm sick of books. Everywhere — newspapers, magazines, and books. And do I get any real pleasure out of 'em? I do not. I read because it's a habit — an appetite I've acquired and must satisfy. All of us are that way, all of us."

I said: "All you have to do is to go hungry for bread and books. Quit stultifying your brain and soul, and making your body flabby, by stuffing yourself with rich foods. Then don't read a line of anything for a month. Suffer a bit. Yes, suffer. Then take your favorite book and read, and you'll walk for a space with the gods. Try it. It's worth it."

Said my friend scornfully: "What do you take me for? Go hungry for bread and books? Bah! And once again, Bah!"

It is seven years ago. I am twenty-one. I have no training but that for a naval officer. I am in a strange city and almost penniless. I rent the attic of a cheap boarding-house. It costs a dollar a week, and for that sum I have a quilt-covered bed next the stairs. A bargain. True, it is a bed jammed among the trunks of the more prosperous boarders, who have rooms; and, true, the only decorations are underwear and stockings of the household weekly wash. Nevertheless, a bargain.

Long and hard I hunt for a job — any kind of work — for I wish to eat. But for many days I find none. Money all gone, I pawn my suitcase for a dollar and a half. One dollar goes for the weekly attic rent. I decide to economize

with the remaining fifty cents. Only food will I buy, and daily papers; but nothing else to read. I do not mind so much not being able to buy books, because I have read much, never have had to want for a book in my life, until lately, and believe that it does not matter to me whether I read or not.

For five cents in these happy days one may get six large buns. I decide to live on six such buns a day. My plan is to eat one bun, then drink much water, in the hope that the water will cause the buns to swell, and so partly fill my empty insides; then another bun and more water, and so on again.

I hunt for jobs all day and until late at night, and when I come back home from wearily tramping the streets I eat half of my daily ration. Three buns, unlimited water. "Swell, you buns!" I say; but, despite my urgings, my stomach does not seem very full after all.

"Perhaps," I think, "not enough water."

But after more glasses of water I am still hungry. I hesitate, and then gobble up my morning's three-bun ration. Still I long for food.

But among my dreams of beefsteaks and potatoes a series of mental pictures of a different kind begin to flash. Scenes from favorite books come, suddenly and unsought, into my mind.

Dan Dravot walks to the edge of the cliff and, scornfully waving aside the savage men who have worshiped him as a god and now would kill him, steps off into space. Turning over and over, he falls down, down, down. Below I see a tiny sparkle of gold in the sunshine, where a little dark body lies upon the rocks. His crown.

Esmond draws his sword upon the king. The Indian servant mutters magic over the grave of the Master of Ballantræ. Swift and sharp and clear, the figures walk across my mental screen — more real than reality. Then

the outlines blur, the pictures grow dark and indistinguishable, just as I forget everything in my interest in the dream. I am desperate, but no effort can recall clearly the story. I find that I long to read, at first books that I love — then anything. I want to read, read, no matter what. I surprise myself with a phrase: "Why, this is hunger — book hunger," I say.

The windows where leather-bound sets of books are mixed with eye-catching arrangements of the latest novels become as fascinating to me and I look into them as longingly, as those where I see waffles and pancakes browning delightfully upon griddles under the hands of white-capped cooks.

One day I see in such a window a set of Kipling. I make a swift decision. Hang the job, for this day at least. Hang it! Let some other fellow get it. Not another minute will I wait. I will satisfy book hunger. Now!

I hunt for the Public Library. I find it. I run up its stairs — no lover to meet his heart's desire more lightly — and enter.

I read, read, read. . . .

I am a prisoner of war in Russia. I am ragged, I am barefoot, I have little food. I have nothing to read, no companions who speak my language. I want bread, want it badly, want it gnawingly. But, more than bread, I want books.

I am on the sick-list. I limp about the prison grounds. Still, I am able to find much of interest in things I see. On the steps of one of the barracks, a white-bearded, bald-headed, barefoot man is soberly sitting, whittling away at a piece of wood. Curious, I go closer. I recognize him as a Kolchak general. He is whittling out his dinner spoon. Scrape, scrape, scrape — the knife smooths away the spoon bowl.

I turn my head away to keep him from seeing me laugh, for into my mind, by some freak, has flashed a picture of Pershing, sitting likewise barefoot, dirty, and ragged, carving himself his dinner spoon out of a bit of wood.

"Would n't Black Jack look funny?" I think, and grin.

Finally, I throw myself on the ground. It is midday and warm. I plan escapes, but know, as I plan, that in my present physical condition escape is impossible. Then my thoughts go back to food. All prisoners think of food, for the body has great control over the mind, after all. And now, as in that stranger city long ago, my dreams are mixed with memories of scenes from wondrous stories; my day dreams become tantalizing as smells of cooking steaks to a starving man.

As the days go on, my longing grows. I find it hard to see humor in the many strange sights about me, many of them grimly comic.

One day I walk into a barracks. I hear someone speaking French. I turn and see a young fellow with good boots — noticeable thing, that — moving a finger along the lines of a page of a yellow-backed French novel, pronouncing with effort every word, evidently understanding little.

Have you ever seen a hungry dog watch a man eat? So I eye that man. I look and look. Then, disturbed by my gaze, he glances up; and in that second I am talking with him.

"Ah, you speak French? What luck. I also know a little of the language," I say eagerly.

He answers haltingly, almost incomprehensibly. It matters not. I am persuasive, eloquent, gay.

In five minutes I have that book.

I hobble hurriedly back to my bunk. I have already looked at the cover. On it *Nana, par Émile Zola.* I have never read a French book before without a dictionary. That makes no difference now. I fall upon this book and

devour it. I understand everything. Not in my native tongue could the pictures come to me more vividly. Life it shows me, coarse, vulgar, rotten — true; but life.

Night falls. No lights, and I cannot make out the printed words. I lie on my bunk and wonder and think and whisper to myself things in the book which have opened up a million new phantom adventures. Then I sleep — and ride down the Avenue of Dreams in a victoria drawn by four magnificent horses, by my side — Nana.

I have been moved to another prison, this time a good one. I have been there for two months. Time has passed agreeably. I have had the companionship of educated men; I have had comparatively good food, and, best of all, I have had more than a hundred books from which to pick and choose. Good that, good!

Then the order comes that I am to be sent to my third prisoner-of-war camp. There I will be with men who speak only Polish and Russian, and there will be no books.

By now I have a hearty respect for book hunger; but it is midwinter, and I know also what it is to be cold and bread hungry. So I realize that my first provisions must be a blanket and food. Only a few books can I take, that is clear — not more than four, I decide. I line up twenty favorites. I look at each longingly. Then I reason: The winter will be hard, I will be sick of myself, perhaps know despair. I must pick four books that will take my mind off myself.

One by one, as carefully as a man should pick a wife (and rarely does), I choose. I discard better-written books than those I select, but no matter. I must have four which will make me forget myself, that is the point.

I am sent to work on the railroad. I have my four books with me. I am often sick. I find breaking ice with a pick along the tracks not so disagreeable as days when I cannot

work and must lie on my bunk. And the nights. Those nights!

Eighty of us in one big room, we sleep on tiers of wooden shelves. We have no mattresses. The room is warm enough; but to keep it so we do not let in a breath of air. As the dark hours pass, our quarters smell more and more of unwashed bodies. Shadows from the flickering lights of the big Russian ovens dance across the floor, and the lice-tormented men, sleeping in their clothes, turn and mutter.

Then it is I pick out from an old bag, which I have named "The Enchanted Sack," one of my four books. I lower myself softly to the floor and creep to where the flames play lightly over its pages — and read and read.

To-night I choose Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*. I like it for its clear use of English words. I like some of Ruskin's ideas, too, but what sweeps me away from myself is that it angers me.

I read along, page after page, delighting in many a beautiful thought, many a well-chosen phrase, many a fair, just denunciation of selfishness and materialism. And then I come across a piece of advice, excellent, perhaps, but delivered with all the dignified, dogmatic, petty anger of a narrow schoolmaster. I chuckle ironically, as I often did at a master at school when he was delivering a tirade. Only I chuckle louder now. I come to the paragraphs where Ruskin tells about washing down the steps of an inn.

"I myself," he writes, "have washed a flight of stone stairs all down, with bucket and broom, in a Savoy inn, where they had n't washed their stairs since they first went up them; and I never made a better sketch than that afternoon."

There, just as clear as a day in Switzerland, when the sun shines fair and bright, I see old Ruskin, dignified, his long white beard wagging gravely back and forth, glaring

disapprovingly at the dirt, and stiffly moving a broom back and forth over the steps. Not down on his knees scrubbing away like a good 'un, mind you; but dipping his broom gingerly into a pail of water, and then, with grand gestures, slowly pushing it along a step, frowning upon the dirt, and muttering to himself: "I, myself, am washing down an inn's steps!" Perhaps a damnably unjust picture, but that is what I see.

And when I read some pompous phrase of this fine gentleman, who, having spent his life in luxury, seems not to realize that to make steps clean for him to put his feet upon, some draggled, life-beaten woman must crouch upon her knees and sop up filth with a rag, — this artistic gentleman with his terrible, moral-preaching denunciations, — I am hot with anger.

"Oh, you prig, you conceited old prig," I cry, half aloud. "It's all right for you to live soft. Good. But until you've lived hard, don't preach, don't preach!"

The man nearest me turns in his sleep and grumbles and groans. The shadows dance and play. The smells of the eighty unwashed bodies fill the air. But I creep back to my place on the wooden shelf, my purpose accomplished — self forgotten. Every other thought is wiped out in my anger against Ruskin. For in anger one forgets.

Sometimes when there is nothing to eat, and I am an intolerable bore to myself, I go to the Enchanted Sack and take out Alphonse Courlander's *Mightier than the Sword*, a story of newspaper life by a man from Fleet Street. I walk through a passageway made up of this book until I come, at last, to my own newspaper days of years ago — that strangely twisted life of the reporter, the spectator of life, who though cut away from it, yet sees more than most men its tragedies and ironic humor. . . .

A hundred scenes come before me, one after another, and always somehow different from other times in other

professions, for now I am a professional looker-on at life, untouched, impersonal, only seeking the news.

Sometimes my courage droops. I think my hardships greater than they really are, though they are nothing to squeal about. Then out of the sack comes *The Four Feathers*, by A. E. W. Mason.

I read how Harry suffers real hardships and real torture. I see him bareheaded, under a burning sun, in a dirty little Egyptian town, with parching lips and bleeding body; I see him in the smothering House of Stone, fighting to stay on his feet amid a mob of howling blacks, night after night.

When these visions have passed, then I think of my own slight discomforts, and know them to be nothing.

I have read these three books until they have begun to lose their entrancing interest, but I still have my fourth book, *The New Machiavelli*, by H. G. Wells. True, I have read it often, too, but it still interests me more than the others. However, I know, in a little, that this book may lose its magic. If that happens, I am going to suffer book hunger again.

As I sit on my bunk, I pull my knees up against my chin and think, and think hard. "*Sacré nom d'un chien!*" I swear with delight. I have it, sure as sin, I have it! I will read it many times again, but I will read it as a new book every time. How? Easily.

I will drive my mind to follow only one kind of thought in this book. When I come to a passage that deals with that thought, I will read it over and over. Then I will let my mind travel far down the many roads toward which the glowing thoughts of Wells point.

I follow out my plan, and it works. Slowly at first; then better; and finally so well that I am astounded. Once I read the book as a romantic love-story, giving no care to

anything else in it; next, as a study in politics; then as a study in educational systems; for theology; for literary style; use of words; sex; life stories (taking this under separate subheads, making each time a new person in the book the chief character, and building the book about him); and a dozen other ways.

The field of subjects seems limitless. The point is, I find, not to follow Wells's ideas blindly, but to catch some thought, perhaps from a paragraph, sometimes from just a sentence, then let my mind build on it: romances, theories, arguments — what you will. It is a glorious game. I read the book to-day: "Theology."

I consider every system of religion and philosophy— often synonymous, these two words — of which I have ever heard. Confucius I remember having read all one long Saturday afternoon in the upstairs part of the library at Annapolis; something of Buddha as I lay with a smashed-up foot in a cheap three-and-six lodging-house on Waterloo Road in London; chapters from the New Testament, which as a boy of eight or nine, one summer when my family was in a little place in Vermont, I read nightly aloud to our old colored nurse (who knew not one letter from another, but the Bible mighty well); Plato, and other Greek philosophers, as I waited for my girl in her father's library (she was always late); Spinoza, when I was supposed to be preparing for an engineering examination (which I flunked); Aztec faith, when reading Prescott one day as I lay in my pajamas under a mosquito netting in a houseboat on a tropical river. A score of different names of great religious teachers and systems came tumbling one after another into my mind, inextricably confused with the backgrounds of where I first heard of them. And then —

The backgrounds drop away and my brain balances clear and cold all these mixed and strange combinations of faith and folly — the skeptic's taunt against the childish

faith of my fathers, mysticism, the doctrines of hate and love, life eternal, transmigration of souls — and out of it all comes one clear thought, as simple as the day.

There comes a time when I lie sick upon the boards of my bunk. With the exception of a few ill men, all are out at work. I read of Remington and Willersley on the mountain above Locarno, and all of their talk of building a new world. The book drops at my side, unnoticed. I, too, dream — dream of noble cities where men live cleanly and fearlessly, where there are great schools, and beautiful parks, and multitudinous splendid libraries, flowers, and laughter, and happiness, without dirt or squalor or hurry or the fierce, greedy desire for selfish gain.

Hour after hour goes by, but I am enthralled. I plan things wildly, but I also work out details, — imperfect, impracticable, no doubt, — laws, methods of transportation, public buildings, systems of education — a hundred things. And my dreams seem reality, and the squalor in which I am lying but a dream. And so my book has taken me through another day.

I read the book for a "Study of Sex." I recall many things I have seen women do, and how at times I have thought of them as a peculiarly mean kind of devils, and again as angels. And much I think, and come to no conclusion about them: petty, mean, spiteful, greedy, sweet, delightful, brave, divine, mysterious creatures that they are.

Another day, bitter and cold. We tramp out at dawn — thirty of us in the working party — to a spot on the railroad a mile or so away. Sleet, blown by a strong wind, lashes our faces blindingly. We work.

The night before I have been reading my book as a writing on "A Man's Work in Life" — a pompous subject. Swinging my pick up and down and driving it into the ice along the rail, almost rhythmically, I think of this

theme. Passages flash into my mind. I remember where Remington goes to tell Isabelle (not his wife) good-bye. He believes his work will bring great good to government and people, puzzled, suffering, hurt by life; and he knows he must give up his mistress to go on with it. I remember almost word by word the passage which tells of their parting scene. I repeat it slowly to myself: —

"Come here," she whispered. "Never mind the porters. What can they know? Just one time more — I must."

She rested her hand against the door of the carriage and bent down upon me, and put her cold, moist lips to mine.

And then we broke down, we broke our faith with both Margaret and Shoesmith, flung career and duty out of our lives, and went away together. . . .

The sleet is still slashing my face, the wind is still trying to cut through me, but, as I swing up my pick, I have forgotten both, and say aloud, bitterly: —

"Soft arms clinging about your neck. Bah!"

Down comes the pick into the ice.

"Holding you back. Bah!"

Up goes the pick.

"Talk about love when a man has his work to do. Bah-h-h!"

Down comes the pick.

And then, in a flash, I realize that I have n't the slightest bother about soft arms clinging to me to hold me back from swinging this cursed pick. I stop and lean on it, and I laugh loud and long. I reach up and rub my matted beard, look down at my filthy, ragged breeches. "Clinging soft arms!" I say, and laugh and laugh.

The other prisoners look at me, then look at one another, and shake their heads.

But I, as I whirl up the pick, letting the handle spin loosely between my hands, giving it a merry double twist — I break into song.

TRANSLATING LITERATURE INTO LIFE

ARNOLD BENNETT

Lo, a parable! A certain man, having bought a large, elaborate, and complete manual of carpentry, studied it daily with much diligence and regularity. Now there were no cupboards in his house; his dining-table consisted of an arrangement of orange-boxes, and he had scarcely a chair that was not a menace to the existence of the person who sat upon it. When asked why he did not set to work, and, by applying the principles of the manual, endeavor to improve the conditions of his life and of the lives of his wife and children, he replied that he was a student, and he plunged more deeply than ever into the manual of carpentry. His friends at length definitely came to the conclusion that though he was an industrious student, he was also a hopeless fool.

By which I wish to indicate that there is no virtue in study by itself. Study is not an end but a means. I should blush to write down such a platitude, did I not know by experience that the majority of readers constantly ignore it. The man who pores over a manual of carpentry and does naught else is a fool. But every book is a manual of carpentry, and every man who pores over any book whatever and does naught else with it is — deserving of an abusive epithet. What is the object of reading unless something definite comes of it? You would be better advised to play billiards. Where is the sense of reading history unless you obtain from it a clearer insight into actual politics and render yourself less liable to be duped by the rhetoric of party propaganda? Where is the sense of reading philosophy unless your own attitude toward the phe-

nomena of the universe becomes more philosophical? Where is the sense of reading morals unless your own are improved? Where is the sense of reading biography unless it is going to affect what people will say about *you* after your funeral? Where is the sense of reading poetry or fiction unless you see more beauty, more passion, more scope for your sympathy, than you saw before?

If you boldly answer: "I only read for pleasure," then I retort that the man who drinks whiskey might with force say: "I only drink whiskey for pleasure." And I respectfully request you not to plume yourself on your reading, nor expect to acquire merit thereby.

But should you answer: "I do try to translate literature into life," then I will ask you to take down any book at random from your shelves and conduct in your own mind an honest inquiry as to what has been the effect of that particular book on your actual living. If you can put your hand on any subsequent period, or fractional moment, of your life and say: "I acted more wisely then, I was n't such a dupe then, I perceived more clearly then, I felt more deeply then, I saw more beauty then, I was kinder then, I was happier then, than I should have been if I had not read that book" — if you can honestly say this, then your reading of that book has not been utterly futile. But if you cannot say this, then the chances are that your reading of that book has been utterly futile. The chances are that you have been studying a manual of carpentry while continuing to sit on a three-legged chair to dine off an orange-box.

You say: "I know all that. But it is not so easy to translate literature into life." And I admit freely that when I think of the time I have wasted in reading masterpieces, I stand aghast.

The explanation is simple. Idleness, intellectual sloth, is the explanation. If you were invited to meet a great

writer, you would brace yourself to the occasion. You would say to yourself: "I must keep my ears open, and my brain wide-awake, so as to miss nothing." You would tingle with your own bracing of yourself. But you — I mean we — will sit down to a great book as though we were sitting down to a ham sandwich. No sense of personal inferiority in us! No mood of resolve! No tuning up of the intellectual apparatus! But just a casual, easy air, as if saying to the book: "Well, come along, let's have a look at you!"

What is the matter with our reading is casualness, languor, preoccupation. We don't give the book a chance. We don't put ourselves at the disposal of the book. It is impossible to read properly without using all one's engine-power. If we are not tired after reading, common sense is not in us. How should one grapple with a superior and not be out of breath?

But even if we read with the whole force of our brain, and do nothing else, common sense is still not in us, while sublime conceit is. For we are assuming that, without further trouble, we can possess, coördinate, and assimilate all the ideas and sensations rapidly offered to us by a mind greater than our own. The assumption has only to be stated in order to appear in its monstrous absurdity. Hence it follows that something remains to be done. This something is the act of reflection. Reading without subsequent reflection is ridiculous; it is equally a proof of folly and of vanity.

Further, it is a sign of undue self-esteem to suppose that we can grasp the full import of an author's message at a single reading. I would not say that every book worth reading once is worth reading twice. But I would say that no book of great and established reputation is read till it is read at least twice. You can easily test the truth of this by reading again any classic; assuredly you will discover in it excellences which had previously escaped you.

To resume and finish: open a great book in the braced spirit with which you would listen to a great man. Read with the whole of your brain and soul. Tire yourself. (Would you not tire yourself at tennis?) Reflect. After an interval, read again. By this process, and by no other, will a book enter into you, become a part of you, and reappear in your life. . . .

I have been consulted about the practice of making notes. Well, I do not care to offer counsels of perfection. My advice is simply to keep a pencil handy and to write down on a small sheet of paper (or in the inside back-cover if the book belongs to you) the number of the page on which anything has struck you, together with the merest hint, in half-a-dozen words, of what it was. If you do this, by the time you have finished the book, you will have automatically constructed a table and page-index of its salient points. It is well, of course, to write on the papers the title and author of the work, the name of the edition, and the date of perusal. A collection of these small sheets of paper would constitute a souvenir of one's reading. At the end of each year one might advantageously spend a few shillings in having the year's harvest bound. Say you have read a hundred books. A hundred uniform leaves would make a respectable volume, whose interest and utility I need not insist on. A row of such volumes would really amount to the secret history of one's life.

SPECIALISTS AND DILETTANTI

BENEDETTO CROCE

Specialization and Dilettantism. — In the days of my early youth, thirty or thirty-five years ago, the word that had the greatest power over me in the field of study, a word that seemed to admonish and reprove me and often made me blush, was that of "specialization," as opposed to "dilettantism." "Specializing" was used to designate the honor of a scholar, and "dilettantism" the contrary, his dishonor. Specialists were scholars who devoted themselves to a definitely circumscribed material and a particular area of interests, passed their days in libraries and archives, and kept themselves *au courant* with the studies of others in the same field; men who looked only to the severe approval of critical journals of history or philology and to the consideration of experts and those competent to judge; men who disdained the praises of the ephemeral press, and looked with special abhorrence on the scribblers who treated every subject with equal superficiality, even when these popular writers possessed a real and lively charm. Of one scholar it would be said, "He knows Venice in the eighteenth century thoroughly"; of another, "He is our greatest expert on fifteenth century Naples"; of a third, "He is studying Bernardino Baldi." And when the expert met the expert, reciprocally inexpert, what a festival! They tasted the pleasure of aristocrats in closed and aristocratic circles, and the courtesies and ceremonies which they exchanged fed their mutual esteem and admiration.

In myself the respect and almost sacred reverence for this kind of discipline was so strong and so persistent, that

I remember when I interrupted my researches on Neapolitan history to perpetrate a little monograph of a philosophical character, I listened rather docilely, not without perturbation, to the authoritative voices that recalled me to a field of studies "in which I was doing so well," and in the pursuit of which "I must not distract myself." And when I began to work in the field of æsthetics and was asked by my specialist friends what I was doing, I hesitated to pronounce a word so much the reverse of serious, and replied that I was occupying myself with researches for a History of Poetics, a word that seemed to me more appropriate to the ears of specialists. And when, in order to clarify certain philosophic and æsthetic problems, I turned to the subject of pure economics, I had to endure the caustic remarks of my specialist and expert friends, who rather benevolently — because they wished me well — ascribed to what they called my "Neapolitan extravagance" the perfectly futile hope of expecting to get anything out of sciences so diverse that they belonged to two different academic faculties, one of letters and the other of law.

The Negative Sense of Specialization as a Symbol. — And now? Have I lost the old respect for specialization? Am I reconciled to the popular and lively writers of the journals and lecture-platforms, to the improvisers and the dilettanti? Nothing of the sort. I am more specialist than ever, and more than ever abhor dilettantism, which, wandering as it often does from the field of belles-lettres to that of politics, has not infrequently been a source of grave danger even to the public weal. At the same time, "specialization" is a word which I conceive very differently now from the way I once understood it.

Specialization is to my mind a *symbol*, a symbol which commands us to concentrate our minds on the particular and the concrete, to study it from all sides, and to penetrate to the very bottom of it. All that man does is in

reality specialized. To everyone there is assigned, according to his time, his place, and his natural disposition, a special field and a particular mission; and to this and no other he should devote his attention, leaving it to nature and to Providence to assign to other men, in diverse circumstances, other missions, all of which, when seriously carried on, will find themselves more or less in harmony and give each other mutual help. The value of this symbol is merely polemical or controversial, and as such serves as a full and perfect force against dilettante dispersion of energy; and therefore to the young, now more than ever, it is necessary to recommend specialization, and to make them ashamed of the facile charm and superficial popularity which most writers aim at nowadays, and which, in so far as it is a professed aim, ends only in defeat and impotence.

But if specialization is a symbol, and if its purpose as such is controversial and therefore negative, we must beware of converting it into a material thing and of giving it a positive content, making it consist merely of restricting one's self to a particular material. And this is the error of specialization in the form in which it was at one time understood. For the difficult specialization of the mind and of the soul, there was substituted an easy and merely apparent specialization, which consisted in dividing into little fragments the world of reality and history, and distributing a fragment to each one, with the recommendation to hold one's own fragment as tightly as possible and not to depart from it on any condition, or change it for another under any circumstances. Now, I do not say that this material narrowing is always in every way useless. It is obvious that a man who works persistently on any fragment of reality, on something hard and unyielding, may on occasion discover some little fact that is not without interest. Even the doorkeepers in libraries and in

archives are often useful to those engaged in research, sometimes even more useful than librarians and scholars; but doorkeepers they remain, and doorkeepers do not make science.

The evidence that specialization, understood in this material sense, is unscientific is confirmed by the fact that those specialists who feel most keenly the opposition to superficiality and dilettantism, very often end by becoming themselves superficial and dilettante. In fact, a specialist, since in his life and studies he is unable to remain completely bottled up in his little closet and is constrained to give judgments and conclusions which his specialty does not offer, and since he is obliged — in order to give some conclusive form to his own specialty — to place it in relation with the rest of life and the world, usually assumes a complete freedom in dealing with those other matters, and proceeds rashly and superficially — worse, in fact, than the worst dilettante. The practical effects of this inevitable consequence have been only too obvious during the war, for the stupidest political, historical, and geographical misstatements were heard, as we all know, from professors of letters, philosophy, history, philology, obstetrics, and so on.

What is worse, the newspapers, and often the public, received them as "the opinion of the illustrious A—— or the distinguished B——." Yes, illustrious and distinguished for having studied the variations in the Greek manuscripts of some author, or traced Dante's allusions to the Fathers of the Church, or reconstructed the series of Lombard princes of Capua, but not for having made their own heads either distinguished or illustrious with anything actual or profound. A friend of mine, who had just read with amazement a political article by one of these professors, which was simply a tissue of rhetorical absurdities and wild assertions, asked me how it was possible that this

distinguished man, who was known to have devoted half a lifetime to the study of five brief years in the life of Monsignor della Casa, had not taken the trouble to spend even a few days in informing himself better in regard to matters that concerned the fate of Italy itself. Or was it because Italy was worth less than five years in the life of Monsignor della Casa?

The Positive Sense of Specialization. — When we really wish to pass from the symbol to the thing symbolized, from the negative to the positive, and to determine the real content of specialization, we find that all true specialism is at the same time universalism, because the single thing does not come into existence and cannot live except as part of a whole, and is in fact the manner by which the whole exists. To understand any particular subject, how is it possible to determine, extrinsically and in advance, all the things that must be taken into consideration and the investigations that must be pursued, since only the mind which goes on elaborating the argument knows its own necessities, which coincide with the necessities of the object itself. It is not possible to point out to anyone the exact course which he should follow in order to become an expert in this or that branch of knowledge, because the ways that seem the farthest may be, for him, not only the shortest but often the only ones that will conduct him to his goal.

It is not possible to judge the solidity and compactness of the work of a scholar from the outside, from the mere titles of his books, because there are men who have treated the most divergent fields of knowledge in a solid and unified way, while there are others who have never gone outside of the very narrowest circle, and yet, despite the apparent unity of the completed work, are always volatile and divided brains that have never known how inwardly to dominate their material. Nor is it possible to judge in-

fallibly even the errors and deflections of a book, unless one observes the function they fill in the development of the thought, because these errors and deflections may be experiments or experiences that will bear fruit in later discoveries, and therefore far more praiseworthy than the flawless works of those who labor mechanically and, following tradition and the impulses of others, never make mistakes. Yes, even the very singularities and idiosyncrasies of a work, however bizarre and frivolous they may seem, may be distractions (in the sense of *levamina mentis*), indispensable solaces to the thinker, of which the mechanical specialist does not feel the need, for why should one crave relaxation and repose if one has never been tired out by the hard effort of thought?

Do you really wish a brief definition of true specialization? It is this: the formation of *personality*. Foolish is he who believes that he possesses it by nature, and sports about and takes pleasure in a vacuous liveliness of style and treatment; but altogether too trusting, too simple is he who believes that he has developed it in himself because he has always attached himself tenaciously to a small material fragment of the world and of history. The work to be accomplished is very different, very much harder, but also in the long run more remunerative.

"THE VULGAR TONGUE"

AMERICAN SPEECH [1]

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

In America, education occupies the attention of everyone; and this is one of the most hopeful things that can be said about our outlook. We are beginning to wonder what education is, and what part of it is connected with schoolbooks.

There has, within the last generation, grown up a scattered class of enthusiasts who are interested in speech. It was revealed to them, perhaps by some deep semireligious instinct, — one of those impulses by which Nature saves herself, — that a person who could *articulate* was a civilized being. They discovered, as it were by a miracle, that the brain, the heart, the attention, the muscular system, the soul and body, were drawn to a focus in the act of speech, and that education began there.

Perhaps, also, the danger that threatened our language through the influx of foreigners, and which was reflected in the speech of our own children and of their intimates, frightened these new prophets. Perhaps the suspicion passed through their minds that, unless they bestirred themselves, they would soon not understand the lingo that was being spoken in their own neighborhood.

Certain it is that many minds among us have been awakened to the importance of articulate speech. This is a matter that has never been neglected in Europe, where people have always taught their children to speak carefully, as a matter of course, and in the same spirit in which they put a spoon in the hands of a baby who is old enough to feed itself.

[1] Published as an appendix to *A Glance Toward Shakespeare:* Atlantic Monthly Press.

But the effort to improve our speech in America must be self-conscious and dogmatic; because a large part of our population believes that babies will find spoons for themselves, and that good speech comes by nature, and is at best a foolish thing.

The problem of reforming the speech of America would seem ghastly and hopeless, but for the fact that such a reform is mimetic rather than rational. Many a man has reformed his own speech in middle life through contact with someone whose voice and utterance he admired. His ears became sharpened.

As for the young, they need only a model and good-will to show a change for the better in a week. Give a shock to a certain portion of their consciousness, and they become aware of their own deficiencies: they hear their own horrors: the rest is easy. There will, no doubt, be many dogmas, many methods, and every one of them will act as a stimulus and a step in advance. When our people shall have come to understand the importance of Articulate Speech, the first province of Learning will have been conquered.

It makes little difference what pronunciation is adopted, so long as the vocalization is good. The Scotch utterance is to my mind beautiful, and reveals the remarkable intellect of that people as clearly as anything they have accomplished. Should America develop a pronunciation totally different from the British pronunciation, there would be nothing to regret, so long as it was good.

But if you slur and gargle your mother-tongue, I question whether your mother-wit will ever do much for literature. The voice is so much a part of the brain, that you can hardly think clearly and yet speak in gibberish; and this is the great and wonderful discovery that America is making.

The bearing of it on Shakespeare is obvious enough; for

the reading of him comes in the wake of seeing him acted, seeing him acted in the wake of reading him; and both come as the strongest stimulus the world has ever known in the provinces of speech and of thought.

A Shakespearean troupe is a traveling university, with this advantage over other universities — that it reaches the young. It inculcates good speech by example, and in the very moment that it does this, it points to the place where true education should begin, — has always begun, — namely, with the study of the great poets.

CURRENT SPEECH

HENRY B. BESTON

I HAVE just been to the country on a picnic. After some dozen miles down quiet rural roads we came to a pleasant pine-wood which hides an excellent spring, and by these cool waters we unpacked our hampers. The sandwiches consumed, the doughnuts eaten, the thermos bottle drained to its last miraculous drop, a picnic mood of sweet content, mild boredom, and gentle out-o'-door spring laziness fell upon us, and I, for my part, turned to our national anodyne, the Sunday paper.

I began in the normal manner with the comic supplement, that journalistic cocktail which enables folk to swallow the massy meal of murders, pay-roll robberies, auto accidents, flayings, probings, idiotic breach-of-promise letters, and baseball gossip. A sunlight so intense and golden as to seem almost tangible came in rays through the branches; little vagrant breezes, sweeping close to the ground, fluttered the "supplement's" edges, and a faint tarry whiff of newspaper ink mingled with the fresh, sweet odor of the pines. But I do not intend to criticize the comic supplement as an institution. Others have done so in unmeasured terms, and if I recollect rightly, "vicious" was the least of their adjectives. Perhaps these good moralists, however, may have been a little too severe. I have no doubt but that the artists — every one of them — are the best of husbands and fathers, live in an atmosphere of domestic quiet, and put out the cat every night before they go to bed. It is enough to say that this particular sheet was vulgar, ugly, and incredibly silly.

Nothing more completely revealed these qualities than

the little speeches which the characters of the "series" addressed to each other. Heaven help us, I thought, if these anthropoid "gotchas" and "getchas" are veritable reflections of our national speech! And I tried to think of a single fellow creature debased enough to talk consistent comic-supplement speech, but in vain. The fact, however, that this lingo, in all its emptiness and vulgarity, is deemed good enough for the millions is a genuinely serious sign; it is a sign that the incomparable raciness and variety of English as *a spoken tongue* are no longer appreciated by the mass of the people. Can you imagine this "gotcha" and "getcha" rubbish as being offered to those everyday London citizens who gave the Elizabethan playwrights their audiences? Are we to allow current speech to sink to this gutter-grating level?

The great trouble with common speech to-day is that there is no model of fine English which is generally read. In other days, there was in every home a model of the noblest tongue ever held up to the admiration of the sons of men — the Authorized Version of our English Bible. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of the King James version on current speech of the past. Read aloud every day, studied in the churches, enjoyed, perhaps unconsciously, as great poetry, the English Bible sat throned in the home as a treasury of dignified speech. Lincoln is incomparably our greatest master of English speech, and Lincoln was a true initiate of the great version. To this day the speech of the old-fashioned, self-respecting, Bible-reading country farmer has a color, a raciness, a flavor, an imagery, wholly unknown to the youngsters of to-day, whose speech is influenced only by some grotesque country paper or hurried metropolitan sheet. Surely of the many effects of the weakening of the church, *the passing of the Authorized Version out of the cultural life of the people* is by no means the least serious.

The comic supplement flutters in the wind. Crows rise on great melancholy wings from the newly ploughed field beyond the wood. O Democracy, what pronunciations are committed in thy name!

SILVER-TONGUED ORATORS

AMBROSE BIERCE

NOWHERE "on God's green earth" — it is fitting that this paper contain a bit of bosh — nowhere is so much insufferable stuff talked in a given period of time as in an American political convention. It is there that all those objectionable elements of the national character which evoke the laughter of Europe and are the despair of our friends find freest expression, unhampered by fear of any censorship more exacting than that of "the opposing party" — which takes no account of intellectual delinquencies, but only of moral. The "organs" of the "opposing party" will not take the trouble to point out — even to observe — that the "debasing sentiments" and "criminal views" uttered in speech and platform are expressed in sickening syntax and offensive rhetoric. Doubtless an American politician, statesman, what you will, could go into a political convention and signify his views with simple, unpretentious common sense, but doubtless he never does.

Every community is cursed with a number of "orators," men regarded as "eloquent," "silver tongued" men — fellows who to the common American knack at brandishing the tongue add an exceptional felicity of platitude, a captivating mastery of dog's-eared sentiment, a copious and obedient vocabulary of eulogium, an iron insensibility to the ridiculous, and an infinite affinity to fools. These afflicting Chrysostoms are always lying in wait for an "occasion." It matters not what it is: a "reception" to some great man from abroad, a popular ceremony like the laying of a corner stone, the opening of a fair, the dedica-

tion of a public building, an anniversary banquet of an ancient and honorable order (they all belong to ancient and honorable orders) or a club dinner — they all belong to clubs and pay dues. But it is in the political convention that they come out particularly strong. By some imperious tradition having the force of written law it is decreed that in these absurd bodies of our fellow citizens no word of sense shall be uttered from the platform; whatever is uttered in set speeches shall be addressed to the meanest capacity present. As a chain can be no stronger than its weakest link, so nothing said by the speakers at a political convention must be above the intellectual reach of the most pernicious idiot having a seat and a vote. I don't know why it is so. It seems to be thought that if he is not suitably entertained he will not attend, as a delegate, the next convention.

Here are the opening sentences of the speech in which a man was once nominated for Governor: —

"Two years ago the Republican party in State and Nation marched to imperial triumph. On every hilltop and mountain peak our beacons blazed and we awakened the echoes of every valley with songs of our rejoicings."

And so forth. Now, if I were asked to recast these sentences so that they should conform to the simple truth and be inoffensive to good taste I should say something like this: —

"Two years ago the Republican party won a general election."

If there is anything in this inflated rigmarole that is not adequately expressed in my amended statement, what is it? As to eloquence, it will hardly be argued that nonsense, falsehood, and metaphors which were old when Rome was young are essential to that. The first man (in early Greece) who spoke of awakening an echo did a felicitous thing. Was it felicitous in the second? Is it felicitous now? As

to that military metaphor, — the "marching" and so forth, — its inventor was as great an ass as any one of the incalculable multitude of his plagiarists. On this matter hear the late Richard Grant White: —

"Is it not time that we had done with the nauseous talk about campaigns, and standard-bearers, and glorious victories [imperial triumphs] and all the bloated army-bumming bombast which is so rife for the six months preceding an election? To read almost any one of our political papers during a canvass is enough to make one sick and sorry. . . . An election has no manner of likeness to a campaign, or a battle. It is not even a contest in which the stronger or more dexterous party is the winner; it is a mere counting, in which the bare fact that one party is the more numerous puts it in power if it will only come up and be counted; to ensure which a certain time is spent by each party in reviling and belittling the candidates of its opponents and lauding its own; and this is the canvass, at the likening of which to a campaign every honest soldier might reasonably take offense."

But, after all, White was only "one o' them dam litery fellers," and I dare say the original proponent of the military metaphor, away off there in "the dark backward and abysm of time," knew a lot more about practical politics than White did. And it is practical politics to be an ass.

In withdrawing his own name from before a convention, a California politician once made a purely military speech, of which a single sample passage is all that I shall allow myself the happiness to quote: —

"I come before you to-day as a Republican of the Republican banner-county of this great State of ours. From snowy Shasta on the north to sunny Diego on the south; from the west, where the waves of the Pacific look upon our shores, to where the barriers of the great Sierras stand clad in eternal snow, there is no more loyal county to the

Republican party in this State than the county from which I hail [applause, naturally]. Its loyalty to the party has been tested on many fields of battle [Anglice, in many elections], and it has never wavered in the contest. Wherever the fate of battle was trembling in the balance [Homer, and since Homer, Tom, Dick, and Harry], Alameda county stepped into the breach and rescued the Republican party from defeat."

Translated into English this military mouthing would read something like this: —

"I live in Alameda county, where the Republicans have uniformly outvoted the Democrats."

The orators at the Democratic convention a week earlier were no better and no different. Their rhetorical stock-in-trade was the same old shopworn figures of speech in which their predecessors have dealt for ages, and in which their successors will traffic to the end of — well, to the end of that imitative quality in the national character, which, by its superior intensity, serves to distinguish us from the apes that perish.

ON THE VULGAR TONGUE

R. L. G.

"The Vulgar Tongue" occupies a position of dignity in the English Baptismal Office. I have known curates to substitute the word "English" for the phrase, whether with the purpose of greater intelligibility, or for the sake of avoiding the appearance of an aspersion upon the English language, I cannot say. The word "vulgar" has fallen upon evil days, yet Dante's *volgare*, for instance, was by no means ignoble speech. For my own part, I confess to being a lover of the vulgar tongue in the sense which the curate seeks to avoid — the actual speech of the great mass of the English people, or what was their speech up to a very recent date; the speech of the multitudinous world of Dickens — of Sam Weller, of Dick Swiveller, of Sairey Gamp; the language too, of the eighteenth-century novels, the Restoration comedies. This was also the speech, for instance, as we shall see directly, of Lady Lucy Pusey, the mother of the great Saint and Doctor of the English Church. How and when did this vulgar tongue, this great living English volgare, become "vulgar," in the bad sense? I think when it was first used with a conscious snobbish sense of inferiority, when people whose mother-tongue it was ceased to talk naturally, and with a painful effort and many relapses into their vernacular, endeavored to speak what was practically a foreign language. What remains of vulgar English at the present day is bad in the further sense that it has lost its traditional character, its brawling, robustious, good-humored straightforwardness and downrightness. It has become anæmic, querulous, drawling. There is a certain house known to me, in which of a Sunday

afternoon, to my great delight, I frequently get back into the middle of the eighteenth century.

Dickens represented the speech of his people phonetically, but whatever the spelling in books, the English *vulgus* — the English people — all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had no doubt spoken in the same way. It was the old English language, not the degradation and corruption of a correctly spoken tongue. Professor Wyld in his new book, *A History of Modern Colloquial English*, is very enlightening on all this. Before the majority of people knew how to write, spelling was apparently a convention of the professional scribes and affords little help in determining the sound of the spoken language. When people began to write their own letters they endeavored to make the spelling render the actual sound of the words. The idea that "good English" is English spoken according to the spelling dates from the middle of the eighteenth century, and is probably largely due to the influence of Dr. Johnson. Since his day people have been trying to construct a language from the received spelling. This tendency has become more marked with every decade, and the process of correcting the traditional spoken English by the spelling-book has been enormously accelerated since 1870. Professor Wyld appears to dread (not, it seems, without reason) the further efforts in this direction of "the lettered democracy of the future."

It is a mistake to suppose that the "vulgar tongue" means the plebian tongue. The very last people to give it up were probably the county families. Lady Lucy Pusey, who died in 1859, well over ninety, to the day of her death never called her illustrious son anything but "Ed'ard." She also always said "ooman" for "woman." Dickens's "lower orders," of course, always did so. But it was a mode of speech which they had in common with those whose family plate, so to speak, included a silver venison-

dish. The greatest aristocrat I have ever known always said "cowcumber," like Sairey Gamp. My own appearance on this planet was not a great many years after Lady Lucy went to her rest, but I never heard anyone above the lowest rank say "ooman." My own mother often told stories in which it occurred in quotations of sayings she had heard. I remember hearing Sir Algernon West say that his own parents always said "Room, goold, chaney, laylock," for "Rome, gold, china, lilac." These words have all been corrected by the spelling from the normal traditional English pronunciation. "Chaney" may perhaps linger among the old ladies in such places as the almshouse at East Grinstead, but I doubt it. As a very little child I always said "laylock." This particular form had outlived its companions. Grown a little older, I suspect — I don't remember, but I fear it may have been so — that I began to correct my mother by the spelling-book. It is very difficult to write on these subjects without becoming autobiographical, and I am moved to put down here that my parents and grandparents all spoke the vulgar tongue, and the best of good English it was. My mother, for instance, always said "husban'" for "husband." Now the insistence on the sounding of "t's" and "d's" in all sorts of words in which for centuries they had lain happily silent is of the very essence of the Board-School, spelling-book English. One must admit, however, that while all the time the matter is in dispute the particular word with the consonant sounded is perfectly hideous, once the innovation is universally accepted, the discarded form becomes a vulgarity. At this moment a battle is raging over "often." The word "often" with the "t" sounded, instead of the old leisurely free and easy "of'n," brings a sense of discomfort and annoyance whenever one hears it; but once let it become the established form (as one knows so well it will), and the ear will forthwith be dissatisfied if

it misses the "t." After all, one cannot get away from the atmosphere; it is completely circumambient, and one must speak perforce the language of one's time. Still "of'n" is worth a struggle. At the present day children in Board Schools are punished for pronouncing it without the "t." On the other hand, the only thing for which I remember my own particular schoolmaster with gratitude is his having given me a jacketing for using the intolerably priggish "Wednesday" for "Wensday." I deserved what I got.

To quote some of these silent "t" and "d" words: "Cris'mas" is blessedly still universal, though I have heard "Christmas" attempted. It sets one's teeth on edge. We still say "whissle" for "whistle." It will be an outrage if the fanatics of correctitude foist "whistel" upon us as the symbol of that happy noise of boys and blackbirds. No doubt they will attempt to do so. "Christen" again for "crissen" I have never heard, though "Christian" for the old English "Chrischen" continually grates upon my ears. Our Nonconformist brethren are great offenders in this respect. It seems that no one could say with any ease "gristel," or even the "gris'l" of the pronouncing dictionaries for what as children we always called "grizz'l." Personally I shall always keep the pronunciation of "Wes' minster," "thousan'," "almon's," "mos'ly," "beas'ly," and the like, which I heard and spoke as a child. I repeat that when the new pronunciation is universally adopted, in some mysterious way it at once appears to be more euphonious. This is particularly the case with proper names as "Clifton," of which the old form is "Cliffen." It is often spelled so in old registers. "Preston" in Sussex was always locally called "Press'n" forty years ago. Talking of place-names — there is always a danger of the local pronunciation being trampled down by outsiders through sheer force of numbers. For instance, all Londoners say

"Arùndel" for the beautiful word "Arundel," the French *hirondelle*. Unfortunately there are many more Londoners than people living in and around the little happy town. "Rumsey" still keeps its head above water, but the difficult and very ugly "Chichester" has quite supplanted the true native "Chidester."

One could gossip endlessly about all these things. I have said that the speech of my childhood was the vulgar tongue, but there are certain things which the speakers regarded as vulgarities, and rigidly eschewed. There was something apparently very arbitrary about this. In reality, when once a form became generally disused, and lingered only among the lowest class, it was considered "vulgar." They said "arrand" for instance, but never "scollard" or "mossel." Now all these three are equally good old English forms, samples, I doubt not, of Sir Thomas Malory's English. A fifteenth century priest, preaching in Holy Week, would say that "Judas took the mossel and went out." The insistence on the "r" seems pedantic, and the resultant word is ugly. But "arrand" evidently went out of use more slowly than "mossel" or "scollard." "Sojer" and "door" (which last the eighteenth-century poets rhyme with "to her") were never used, but the present day "soldier" and "dore." "After" was scrupulously pronounced, "arter" or "a'ter" being left severely to the untaught and unwashed, though we have the sufficient witness of the nursery rhyme to the fact that it was the true old traditional English form: —

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down
And broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling a'ter.

"Spannel" for "spaniel," and "Dan'l" (like Lady Lucy's Ed'ard) for "Daniel" were always used, as they had been

for centuries. "Weskit" for "waistcoat," and "forid" for the horrible "forehead," I am thankful to say have not even yet been displaced. "Cubbard" too, still holds its own. My father, I remember, regarded "again" for "agen," and "against" for "agenst" with peculiar bitterness. These forms fortunately still have the protection of the dictionaries, though no doubt it is only a respite. There was a great tendency to substitute "d" for the written "t" as in "Prodestant" and "Jupider." Chitterlings were always spoken of as "chidlins." It goes without saying that "sparagus" or "sparagrass" was always used. Language was not rigid, but plastic, as in Italy. The atrocious "clerk" for "clark," of course was never heard. This is perhaps the most frightful of the sacrifices offered to the fetish of spelling. A very charming poem by "Tomfool" in the *Daily Herald* was recently ruined for the sensitive ear by the employment of this form. I had thought better of "Tomfool" than this — indeed I think very well of him. Our forefathers said not only "clark," "Barkshire," "Darby," but "clargy," "sarvice," "sarmon," "sarvant," and the "'varsal world." "Stummick" and "Izik" were always used. "Stummick" has become unpleasant (though many whom it would doubtless fill with disgust now talk of their "tummies"), but I confess that when I hear an eighteenth-century old lady say, for instance, "Don't want no strawberries nor yet no tomatoes; sims to turn acid on me stummick; far rather have a good glass o' port wine," it warms the cockles of my heart. Again, to hear such an old lady exclaim in a mellow voice, "Where's me pen?" is very pleasant. "Where is my pen?" does not seem to promise so well for the cheque the speaker is going to write. This English is much more expressive than the spelling-book English. "Sossidges" are something that hiss and splutter in the pan; "sawsage" is a fearsome compound, of which all you can be sure of is that it is something cold.

To give one last recollection — "to hate 'em like pizen" in my childhood was a very familiar phrase.

There is no space left in which to speak of the colloquial English idiom of my recollection. But I have no doubt that in my early days I heard and spoke the English not so much of the eighteenth, as of the sixteenth century. Professor Wyld gives a selection of passages illustrating the transition from the language of the sixteenth century to that of the present day. Among the best is one from Lord Bacon, in which he says, "Hasty speech confounds the memory, and oftentimes besides unseemliness drives a man either to a non-plus or to unseemly stammering." How often have I heard my grandmother say when, for instance, the old lady could no longer see to thread her needle, "I'm brought to a non-plus." I suppose one may occasionally still hear the phrase. I only know that belonging to my own time, I never use it naturally and spontaneously myself, or think of using it. "Eight of the clock, eight of the clock," said the dying Cardinal Wolsey, and so continued rehearsing divers times "eight of the clock." There are old English phrases that have altogether vanished, not only the use of them, but all recollection of their origin and meaning. When Sir Thomas More's wife came to him in the Tower to urge him to forgo the martyr's crown, she told him that instead of being shut up with mice and rats, he might be in his good house at Chelsea at liberty and in favor with the King, if he would do as the Bishops and all the great ones of the land had done. "Good Mistress Alice," he replied, "is not this house as nigh to heaven as my own?" To this she answered, after her accustomed fashion, "*Tillie-Vallie, Tillie-Vallie!*" This is put in italics, like her other exclamation, "*Bone Deus!*" It was evidently a common exclamation in the sixteenth century. In Shakespeare it also appears in italics: "*Tilly-fally*" is Mrs. Quickly's version of the phrase. The glossaries give

no explanation of it. What does Tillie-Vallie mean, and when was it last used, simply and naturally, in England? It is strange that someone so said "Tillie-Vallie" for the last time.

To hear people talking, freely and at their ease, gives the listener the sense of the world to which they belong. The painter and the novelist make their records for posterity. Such a picture as Samuel Butler's "Family Prayers" brings us into the atmosphere of a wealthy and pious mid-Victorian household in a marvelous manner. Still more would this be the case if a conversation of any given time in the past could be magically evoked and heard again. Professor Wyld says when we read old letters in the writers' individual spelling "we seem to hear real people actually speaking." To hear them actually talking — ah! this is just what one would like to do!

CURIOSITIES OF AMERICAN SPEECH

The Sun (New York)

Is a pancake fried or baked, or simply cooked? Is it after all really a pancake and not rather a griddle cake, a flannel cake, a buckwheat or a flapjack? What is a doughnut? When you tear your trousers on a sharp point, is the first word you instinctively apply to the rectangular rent, trappatch, barndoor, or weewary, as says the New Englander, or is it winklehawk or nicklehawk, as New Yorkers say? What do you mean by dingbats? How widespread is the use of the shinny? Such are the problems set by the American Dialect Society in Part VIII of its *Notes*, which will be published in a few days.

Three distinct recipes for the preparation of doughnuts are promulgated by the Society. Dough, raised with yeast, sweetened and spiced, cut into cubes, which, when fried in a deep vessel with hot fat, become round lumps, forms the doughnut of Connecticut. By substituting soda or saleratus for yeast, and cutting the paste into circles or twists, you have the doughnut of Massachusetts, which the Dutch settler calls the clykock and others the cruller; while the native of Connecticut distinguishes between the twisted biled cake and the round jumble. If merely unseasoned dough be used, you have the fried bread of Massachusetts, called on Cape Cod seventy-fours, and elsewhere, it seems, doughnuts.

The dingbat has had an adventurous career. Starting as a ball of dirt on the legs of sheep in Vermont, it becomes a smart spank to the northern New Englander, a squabble, a flying missile, and money to the Maine lumberman, the biscuit of the New England boarding-school, while in

Georgia it has turned to a mother's kiss, and you may say of the girl you admire: "She's a regular dingbat."

It must not be inferred that culinary and domestic matters alone engross the Society's attention, though it is at home that the careless words and phrases are most likely to be used, which deviate from literary forms, but have passed from mouth to mouth since man first spoke. This part of *Dialect Notes* contains no less than six hundred new words and usages, collected throughout the land, some poetical, many picturesque, and all curious and interesting.

In the Tennessee mountains, streams flowing from the east are sunrise waters, a mule that you can trust is a confidential mule, a railroad train is a smoke wagon, a kiss is a smouch, cheese is a plural with the singular "chee," sugar is sweetening, but molasses is long sweetening, a man subject to fits is fitified, and very much is a heap sight, or a good few, or some several, or way yander. A man points to a hillside and tells you that he "lives on yon coast" and has a "good scope of land"; he greets you with "How do you come on?" and asks you to "come in and rest your hat." A toothbrush to him means a snuff stick, ill means cross, juberous timid, fisty mean, popular stylish; his past tenses are fotch, and holp, and seed, and squoz, and swole; he tells you that "sickness is mighty interruptin'," that it is "a gosh wet spell," and "hit's too-my-goodness cold," that he has "the beatenest boy and talkenest old woman you ever see," and that that young flirt is "tryin' to git a chaw on a feller."

The stybake or stay-at-home Jersey matron coosters or potters around the house, calls her preserves do-ups, pork spack, her husband — if need be — a lobscouse or loper, meaning a worthless fellow. She sides up or cleans up or goes strulling, wasting time about the village, but she cares not a Dutch cuss about going down-country, that is, to New York City.

From the shores of Newfoundland come some timely words: lolly is the ice and snow in the water near the shore, slob is soft snow, swatch is a hole in the ice; a person thoroughly chilled says he's "just scrammed." To the fisherman a sleet storm is a silver thaw, and the sound of the waves breaking on the shore is rote; his improperly baked bread is dunch, the material for his fish balls is huggerum buff, unfair behavior is hunkersliding, and a quid of tobacco is old sojer. He calls fish that is not sorted tolqual, which is the French *tel quel*, as the Maine backwoodsman's compropo for a Frenchman is *comprend pas*, and the Gloucester fisherman's matross for a sailor is the German *Matrose*.

Coof is the name for an off-islander in Nantucket, on Mount Desert the summer visitor is a rusticrata, a stupid Vermonter is a dodunk, a goober-grubber digs peanuts in Tennessee. When a man is confused he is mommixed in Kentucky, he is muxed up in Otsego county, galleyied in New Bedford, stodged in Indiana, and wuzzled in central New York. "I don't hurt for it," means "I don't care" in Mississippi, while "I don't mind it a bit" implies terror in North Carolina, where a great calamity is scandalous. The sunset is day-down on the Virginia coast. A man has large money in Cincinnati, he has scuds of it in Missouri, and a session of it in Georgia. When a Terre Haute citizen is sullen he is putchiky, and if too weak to get out of bed is on the lift, while a pawky Ohioan is one in poor health, and a mentally weak Kentuckian is slack-twisted. Hogo is a strong smell in New Hampshire, where a severe storm is a tan-toaster. Missouri slush is sposh. Green corn remains roast'n ear in Florida even when it is canned, and there a cow may give birth to a yearling.

But why go so far afield in search of picturesque English when we have it all around us in New York State? The Society has hardly touched the mine of linguistic richness

under its hand in this city. We are told, to be sure, that in fashionable boarding-houses we may be requested to tum the butter, that our water men say that a schooner is wung out when she sails wing and wing, and that drug for drew and scrope for scrape may be heard among us. But what are these to the "geeswax Christmas" and the "I'll be dingswizzled and horn-swaggled," by which our rulers up the State express their amazement? The farmers of Orange and Sullivan counties have the reprehensible practice of making their maple syrup by melting the sugar; this they call alamagoozleum. On Staten Island splendid is galoptious, tit-bits are manavelins, and to turn is to tarve. Patchogue says noink and suink for nothing and something. In the northwestern part of the State when two young hearts begin to beat as one they are said to be sacmuljugated. The Ithacan on entering the house hangs up his shock, — his hat and coat. The Otsego thief when caught looks meeching or guilty, even when he has stolen a mere smitch, a very small quantity. Quarter eagles must be more common in the central part of the State than in the city, for they are still known as twenty-shilling pieces, and silver dollars as hard-tack. There slouchy is lop-lolly, sticky is tacky, you are bushed when you are tired, you change off when you move, you go large when you are extravagant, you pronounce hoax as a dissyllable, you pooster about when you are fussy, you are in a yang when in a hurry, and when violent you do things kabang, kachunck, kaflop, kaslam.

It would be a cause for regret if these picturesque reflections of life were lost to the world. We look forward with interest to the Dialect Society's investigations into the various styles of New Yorkese.

A GROUP OF STUDENT ESSAYS

TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS

To most people the name of Truro suggests nothing. It is merely one of the numberless small towns of Cape Cod, the "summer playground of New England." But to me it suggests many things that I love — space, wind, light, freedom from the noise and dirt of the city, from the duties of society, and from people. "The world is too much with us" — but Truro furnishes my avenue of escape.

It is the birthplace and the home of my grandmother and of my great grandmothers as far back as record goes. It is also home to me — a place where I have spent a great part of my life. It is more my home than the place where I was born and continue to live. Sometimes, while walking by the little old schoolhouse, I have thought how many times my mother carried her books along the same path. I recall saying when I was younger to a visitor, "My great-grandfather built that house," of an old house on the shore road. And in coming to the Life Saving Station, how proud I was to tell her that my great uncle, for forty years, was captain there.

The town is situated almost on the tip end of the Cape — nine miles from Provincetown — and extends across the Cape from the Bay to the Atlantic. At this end, however, the Cape is very narrow — only some two miles wide, in fact. There is water, water, everywhere — rivers, inlets, ponds, our Bay, the ocean. Truro is almost like a little Dutch town. The sparkling blue of the water and the vast blueness of the sky meet in an almost unbroken line. There is the pungent odor of long, dank sea-grass; great stretches of marsh; and the salt tang of the sea-wind. At night the white, damp fog creeps in "on little cat-feet"

and settles on the town. In the distance there are the blue-green hills, the background of low white farmhouses and great gray barns. Corn Hill, on the Bay side, is the attraction of tourists, for it is here, affirms the *History of Truro*, that the Pilgrims landed for water before arriving at Provincetown.

The population of Truro is about four hundred — it was about four hundred when my grandmother was a little girl, and probably will always be that. There are now far more Portuguese than Americans, in spite of the fact that years ago there were almost none. Indeed, the American element of the population consists mainly of old, retired sea-captains and their families.

There is one general store. I cannot remember there ever having been another. It is such a store as one can find only on the Cape, of the type that Joseph Lincoln so aptly describes — old, dusty, gloomy, smelling strongly of kerosene and molasses, the shelves cluttered with nondescript articles. There is a large stove in the centre of the room where the old sailors used to warm themselves and swap stories. I would stay there by the hour listening to their descriptions of exciting incidents — of the salt ship Jason that was wrecked opposite the Life Saving Station and only one man saved; and of that day years ago, when the people thought that the world was coming to an end because there was no sun for forty-eight hours; and of the time when a boat, fishing for cod, was rammed by a sword-fish and sunk. They were old men then, and now there are but two left — old Eben, who runs the store, and Ezra who drives the hack when his "rheumatiz ain't so wuss."

Nevertheless, to others Truro is the most unattractive town, the most inconvenient place to get to, and the most inconvenient place to live in imaginable, situated as it is on the "end of nowhere." I seem to be alone in my love for it. Even my mother, who was brought up there, can

not stay longer than a week. I stayed there one whole winter — the happiest of all winters. The storms, the snows, the sunsets, the pines, all are wilder and darker on this part of the Cape. The winds and the rains are fiercer, the pine cones better. There are only hills, water, and sky.

The very remoteness of the town, its inaccessibility, is to me its virtue. It is not overrun by summer people, who are ruining the Cape. They build, tear down, build again, establish stores, hotels, and tea rooms. Why do they change it all? On some parts of the upper Cape there have sprung up small cities where, in summer, the people flock and live as they have lived all winter — in a mad whirl of society. But Truro is untouched by all this. It is still as it was years and years and years ago!

P. L. M.

THE ROMANTIC WEST

I OFTEN wonder what the Easterner thinks when, with his head full of the West as the moving-pictures and magazines show it, he really sees it for the first time. The wide, paved streets and fine buildings of the larger western cities must be rather a disappointment to him, especially if, far down in his heart, he holds the idea that life in the far West consists of living in a hut on a mountain-side, and shooting passers-by indiscriminately. It may be unbelievable, but some people really do have that impression. A girl once said to me, "You are n't at all what I thought a Denver girl would be. Why, you are just like other girls!" She evidently had expected me to appear with a lariat and spurs, and a large pistol. Ah, no! Denver is very much like Milwaukee or Springfield or any other city of medium size. The railroads and telegraphs, by obliterating distance, have destroyed the individuality it may have had in former years.

Yet the West of romance did exist once, and not a long while ago, as one thinks back. My father tells of the Denver of the eighties when he went there first; and my uncle, who crossed the prairies in a stagecoach, remembers Denver's beginnings. A straggling little settlement it was, dotted down on the plains, its population shifting as adventurers and fortune-hunters came and went.

Denver has lost all signs of those times now, — it is quite civilized and unexciting, — but in Cripple Creek and Georgetown one finds it easy to reconstruct the days of thirty years ago. The scenery with which the stage was set is still standing. The background of mountains is unchangeable; it is only the stage properties with which man once decked it that show the passage of the years.

Georgetown is in a deep valley, with steep gray-green mountains on all sides; the sun does not reach it until late in the morning. Ramshackle old frame-houses, wooden walks with great gaps in them, a hotel, several saloons, a post office — all are reminders of the days when Georgetown meant wealth for the seeking. The hotel was considered the finest in the West. My father knew the proprietor. He was a Frenchman who had left his own country for unknown reasons, and had wandered until he finally settled down as a hotel-keeper. He was an interesting man, with his courtly manners and his closed past. I had dinner at the hotel one day, years after his death. One could imagine the awe and admiration which the red carpets, heavy carved mahogany furniture, and scrolled green wall-paper inspired in the nineteenth-century beholder. Fortunes were made and lost over night in Georgetown. Prospectors came, knocked together a little shanty, and stayed until they had mined enough — or won their sum at cards. Then they left. The huts settled down with a lopsided dejected appearance, to wait for the next occupant, or for the falling to pieces which would eventually come. It is a dreary town; all the empty shanties give it a forlorn look, and the sight of an occasional passer-by makes it seem only the more deserted. What a change from the old vigorous days and vivid boisterous nights! The settlement is the hint of the story which lies around the black holes far up the mountain-sides — the mouths of the silver mines.

Cripple Creek vied with Georgetown. My father often went there on business. He tells of the nights — impenetrable blackness — when to be out alone meant to risk death, and when there was drinking and fighting and gambling in the hotel until dawn. Accommodations were so few that the beds in the hotel were used in six-hour shifts. At the end of a shift all the occupants were turned out,

and the beds allotted to a new set. They were rough times; and the men were not only rough, but unscrupulous, and mad for gold. Cripple Creek, too, has settled down and become apathetic.

And if the towns are not what the sight-seeking traveler expects, neither are the people. The actors of the drama have changed. Even the cowboys are not so picturesque as William S. Hart would have one think. Only on rare occasions are they seen in their old-time glory: Frontier Day, at Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Stock-Show Week in Denver, are two of the most renowned.

On Frontier Day the cowboy is the centre of all things. The celebration comes every year, and lasts for a week-end, rather than a day. Every available place for the visitors to stay in is taken, and accommodations range from the hotel suite to some kind lady's front parlor. There are horse-ropings, cattle-throwing, and all-night dances, and other strenuous amusements. The cowboys appear in shaggy, silky "chaps," and beautifully embroidered sombreros, and silk shirts, with silk handkerchiefs knotted around their necks. The shirts and handkerchiefs are always brilliant, although not always harmonious. They bring their saddles of fine leather, studded in designs with brass nails; and when "rigged out" in the whole outfit and mounted on their fine horses, they are a sight to gladden the heart of the tourist.

Stock-Show Week in Denver is also an annual event. Fine stock is sent in for exhibition; there is riding and driving; and ribbons and cups are awarded. During the week the city is full of cowboys and prosperous, rough-looking stockmen, rolling about in fur coats and fine beaver sombreros, diamonds in their cravats and on their fingers, big cigars between their teeth. They are a distinct type which the Denverite always recognizes.

And so the romantic objects, which the searcher for the

Romantic West finds, will be few. He will discover that the West is different from the East in some ways; but that, after all, there is a kind of commercialized similarity. To get the real spirit — to feel he is "out where the West begins," he must have imagination to see the old days behind the new, and rebuild them for his own joy.

M. C.

OCTOBER IN CALIFORNIA

Now is October in the High Sierras. Nervous rustlings of pines and tamaracks, swirls of aspen leaves and clouds of fragrant needles, swept about us by sudden spurts of wind, tell us that summer has gone. Up among the high sharp peaks where on a July day you can hear the crash and rumble of falling rocks, flurries of snow are hiding the barren surfaces. Packers are coming down the trails with their strings of mules, the deer are flitting by night to the lowlands, and the bears have already prepared their dens against the cold.

Over along the coast where the redwoods grow the thickest, in deep canyon and narrow valley, drenching rains are supplanting the summer fogs. These thirstiest of trees can now drip contentedly the winter through. The Pacific, forgetful or careless of its reputation, growls in caverns under our feet as we stand on a rocky bit of shore, and sends up succeeding columns of icy, swirling spray: forerunners, these growlings and swirlings, of storms to come.

Southward, throughout the great valleys, we find joyful activity. Now that the summer heat and drought are over, from dun-colored hills on the west to dun-colored hills on the east the land must be prepared for fruit and grain. By Christmas the undulating miles will be covered with soft green things for the frozen East.

Still farther to the south the dark gloss of orange and lemon trees, the gray-green of the eucalyptus, the masses of bloom in garden and park are unchanged. But the seashore is giving up its hordes, along the highways the dust rises in continual greeting to returning campers, and

waves of tourists arrive on every train. The cities become feverish in their renascent gayety.

Perhaps, however, one must be of the desert and the desert-dwellers truly to appreciate Californian October. Now we emerge from our summer coma, from the long siesta which had insinuated itself into our blood. We unearth our blankets, we renew our acquaintance with hot food and drink, we revive forgotten comforts and pleasures, until we decide that after all life may still hold something worth while. The very cacti seem to stiffen and preen their thorns, or even put forth tiny green leaves in tribute to the blessed coolness. The dunes are soft and inviting in autumn's less glaring light. The rustling, squirming, squealing life of the summer nights is gone; the things that crawl and the things that creep have followed the example of the big bears of the Sierras and betaken themselves to their subterranean homes. Only the watchful "billy owl" and the meandering coyote remain to give their mournful salute to the dusk. The solitary "desert rat," pathetic yet persistent follower of the golden ghost which haunts the barren mountains, draws his musty quilts about him, while his burro and his dog huddle together near by. Penetrating heat has given place to penetrating coolness, keenly felt by blood thinned through long subjection to the scorching sun. From sparkling, mirage-laden morning to opalescent, purple-shadowed eve, the desert is October's own.

M. A. E.

CARLYLE AND MODERN EDUCATION

Suppose Thomas Carlyle should come to life to-day, in the twentieth century, come to life just as truly his Carlylian self as he was ninety years ago — might we not imagine that he would express himself on the subject of modern schools and education something in this wise?

Truly I had believed it bad enough in my own day, when every boy and young man must bear the torture of daily being forced to listen to, at the point of the rod, the "innumerable dead Vocables" which our teachers, so-called, took a dull delight — if they could feel delight — in cramming into our brains. But now I perceive that it was not the limit, — indeed I believe there is no limit, — for what do they do to-day but suffer that their daughters, as well as their sons, undergo that same mental grinding and stuffing. Could they not, at the very least, have left untrammelled the tender minds of those soft young things — so exquisitely filled with gentle fancies? But no! they must take the fresh young glow from her cheeks, leaving her pale and hollow-eyed, and stuff that poor brain so full of ugly facts of science, that, by the time she is through, there is — except she be a spirit of some higher order — no spark of living imagination left within her soul.

For one thing, however, I must proceed to give credit, to whomever it may be due, that the girl's memory is not instigated by the birch rod — that, indeed, I could never have forgiven. Neither — I continue to give credit — have I noticed of late any tendency toward the use of the rod even in a boys' school, in fact, it seems that it is not at all "the thing to do." This, I repeat, is a worthy loss. I have observed, too, that there is more freedom of inter-

course between teacher and pupil — that some teachers seem to realize that there is something valuable to be gained from the students. In truth, I was quite alarmed one day when, on visiting a class in history at one of these modern colleges, the instructor allowed the pupils to dawdle — as they would once have termed it — for a full hour over some current question in which they were interested; and I was nearly overcome, when in the course of the discussion said instructor actually laughed — not an ill-concealed smile, but a hearty laugh — at a curious remark made by one of the students.

True, I believe that I should almost prefer to attend school to-day rather than in my own time; still, I like not this hurry! It is so often said: "We must cover so much ground," rather than: "We must discuss thoroughly and try to understand" a certain subject. Surely it seems to me that if the World does not stop somewhere in its giddy speed of discovering, inventing, and making something more and something new every day, it will not be long before it will — exhausted by its own progress — whirl like a spinning top, off into the Infinitude of Space and Darkness.

D. E. B.

THE COMIC MASK

To every age its virtues — and its sins! To ours — have you not seen? have you not heard? — the one thing needful is gravity. Take all things seriously, yourself, your "life work," the world, but most of all yourself. Never forget that you are you, an individual different from all other individuals, with your God-given message essential to the saving of the world. Let no one, not even your own heart, tell you you are insignificant; are you not you? Is not the world at this present moment waiting, on tiptoe, for your oracles?

"During the War, the whole world threw off its folly and settled itself to the grim task of beating the Boche. Fine ladies, who had never so much as sewn on their own buttons, worked long hours, day after day, making bandages. Young dandies exchanged their spats for puttees and canes for guns. Men who had not thought for years took stock of their own minds and —"

Ah, it begins to sound familiar, does it? You have heard fifty sermons, and read a hundred essays on the theme? And did none of them ever tell you that men joked in the trenches, and that the French (who had been "bled white," you remember) were giving German opera in Paris? Once, indeed, the Germans, flying over, bombed the city so hard that singers and audience had to retire to the cellar of the building, where, by dim light and with cast and audience not twenty feet apart, the performance was continued. That is one way to "carry on." Mind you, I am not saying that it is better than psalm-singing, but — it is one way.

During the aforementioned War, I wrote this sentence:

"Life is too serious a thing nowadays for us to face it solemnly, and death too near a thing to be considered mournfully." At the time, it was simply the practical meeting of a concrete situation; to-day it seems a reasonable way of life. Be solemn, if you like, about all frivolous things; but, oh, take serious things with a dash of flippancy! Light matters can afford a bit of ballast in the way of importance, but important and difficult things have all they can do to carry themselves without the extra weight of solemnity. Be as intense as possible over movies and ice cream and hairdressing; keep lightness for hope and fear, for work, for art, for virtue, for success and failure, for living and dying.

Who would write if he took himself seriously? You pretend to write, perhaps, for the good of the world, but you know very well it is for the relief of your own soul. Your heart and mind can hold only so much; then they spill over. After a certain amount of pummelling in this giddy game of life you crawl to the sidelines and whistle a tune and write. You are quite aware that all you write has been written a thousand times before, and better written; and that Professor Kilifrog's researches have conclusively proved that our justly famed "arboreal ancestors" chattered about it in the tree tops some little time ago. And it is the same with all other trades. Everyone knows that however much his family may flatter him, or his boss curse him, he is really a very tiny, unimportant speck in this huge, impossible, comical, yet strangely touching world.

Who, that is altogether solemn, can be virtuous? It takes a sense of humor to be kind and comforting; and as for truth, that is a luxury which only the gay can afford. Were you ever caught suddenly, unexpectedly, by stark truth, when you had had no time to put on your armor of laughter? That is why the black watches of the night are

difficult: alone, in the dark, nonsense is hard to find. And honesty — why, if it were not for humor we should all turn cheats and liars. Who would deny himself a much-desired success because of that old shibboleth of honor unless he could laugh at himself as he did so? Be not alarmed; the fine, the delicate plant of honor will live and flourish as long as laughter's broad leaves shelter it from the too hot rays of desire.

And the funny part of all this is, that laughter, that covers up so many hard, and sad, and bitter things, so that they do not darken too much the lives which touch yours, is never taken seriously; indeed, by its very nature it cannot be so taken. To have a serious discussion of nonsense would be as absurd as a heated discussion of refrigerators. But laughter, heaven-born imp that he is, has a sense of humor of his own and will never let your scorn or my fun-poking keep him away. Life's wine of joy is in a fragile goblet; between your tense and eager fingers the slender stem is snapped; yet even as you watch aghast the red stain spreading, laughter is on your lips again, triumphant.

E. R.

PERSONALITY AND PENCILS

THERE are a thousand schemes for entrapping the elusive myth, personality — that strange part of us that is the sum of all that we are. They say that we betray it by the clothes we wear, by the rooms we live in, by the food we eat, by the way we walk, by the way we write, and, I would add to the grand total, by *the pencils we write with*! For in all other things but this we are influenced by public opinion. We wear what our friends and relatives tell us is becoming; we accept the hints of the *House Beautiful* and the *Ladies' Home Journal* in furnishing our homes; we eat what Mr. Hoover tells us to, and we affect the postures and handwriting of our favorite movie-actor. But no mother ever told her daughter that a green pencil went better with her pink dress than a yellow one. No advertiser boasts that Mary Pickford uses his Special Brass-Tipped No. 2 exclusively. The stern hand of law and the compelling one of fashion do not touch our pencils. By being below the notice, they are above the interference of outsiders; and on them we unconsciously record our personality.

Just lift the desk-lids of your friends and look into their minds. Here is one girl, outwardly the incarnation of mild conservatism, who betrays an inward love of barbaric display by a copious collection of long pencils, red, green, and yellow, striped and shaded, and lettered in gold. Here is a girl whom you always thought calm and care-free. But these chewed and ugly stumps show her to possess a mind gnawed with care. Here is a dainty and feminine person with a neat silver pencil. There is a thoughtless individual who has none at all. You have a feeling that

she borrows from her friends and looks over their shoulders at what they are writing. And in this desk are three dark red cylinders, sharpened to a hair's thickness. Here we have a fastidious person, pleased with herself, and a little too interested in her tools to be greatly interested in her work.

And if the pencils themselves, factory-made, are such telltales, how much more so are the movements we make in handling them! One girl will poise hers delicately between thumb and forefinger and, flourishing her little finger, write in an elaborate script. You may spot her as the owner of a vain and idle mind. The next girl will grasp hers near the point and scratch off her words in a violent concentration of energy and ability. Another will hold hers rather high up, with a light but firm touch. She is the artistic girl who can draw. The nervous girl will continually tap and fool with hers and leave her mark on whatever objects come within her reach. The careless girl you will usually see making a series of vague darts into her desk and books, to try to remember where on earth she left her pencil.

Then observe the points of the pencils of your friends, and you will be able to put the finishing touches to your estimate of their characters. The stingy girl shaves hers off with a bare quarter-inch of wood showing and a nasty pin-prick of a point. The generous girl lays bare a long, free sweep of unvarnished wood and of lead. The girl of a mechanical mind grinds hers in a pencil sharpener. The precise person's knife-strokes form geometrical triangles in the cut wood, while those of the careless one wander toward the point in bumpy curves.

And one and all doubtless think they hold in their hands a servile stick that must helplessly write out their thoughts. But all the time the pencil laughs and writes on itself their inmost secrets.

M. D.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

HERE it comes, the iron monster breathing fire and destruction, with a long train of dingy cars tied to its tail! You call it ugly, this sooty henchman of Mercury; you think of it in terms of day-coaches, littered with orange-peels, of grimy children that lurch about in the aisles and play with the ice-water, of tired Pullman passengers lolling on dusty pillows, of car-sickness and cinders in the eye and utter weariness. Yet here too are Romance and Beauty, and such Romance and Beauty as the lumbering stage-coach of other days never compassed.

The boy Stevenson stood in the Edinburgh station and followed the outward-bound trains with his eyes and his wandering heart; and though in later years the pressure of civilization drove him to seek Romance in far-off places and forgotten times, I cannot but feel that the master's first thought was best.

And Beauty! Board the train with me, and before our friend the realist has found words to describe the gray sordidness of the station and the railroad yards, we shall be speeding past green, open fields and pleasant woodlands. You will guess what secrets lie hidden behind this or that knoll; you will speculate, and spin a tale out of all that you see. You will lean forward to look at a flower; and before you have discovered its identity, you will be crossing a stream which mirrors willows — and a scrap of summer sky. If the wind is blowing in the right direction, you will catch the fragrance of wild roses blossoming beside the tracks, and hear, faint and sweet, the call of a meadow lark in the next field. You will see the red sunset flame up in the west, and, when it is dead, you will peer into the

dusk and watch the lights appearing in distant towns and lonely farmhouses. You will be lulled half asleep by the sound and motion of the train as it rocks rhythmically over the sleepers. And then (if you have the misfortune to be tall) you will fold yourself up neatly in your narrow berth, and fall into uneasy slumber even while you are gazing out at the silent stars and moving black hilltops. You will wake with a start in the middle of the night and look for some familiar mark by which to discover what city you are in. You will wake again and feel the dawn-wind chilling your toes; and by that you may know it is your chance for sound slumber. For if you yield gracefully, you will find the uneasiness of railroad slumber pleasant — full of the mystery of strange places and the spell of the starlit night; and between the first gray light of morning and the rising of the sun, when everything seems dead, you may have unbroken rest.

For myself, I find nothing prosaic about this monster you think so ugly. How much more splendid than the mud-spattered stagecoach it is, speeding straight as an arrow over the limitless prairie, or panting up the snowy mountain-side to the crest of the continent! I think nothing ever stirred my young imagination so deeply as the train rumbling by at night, with its one blazing eye, and its chain of lighted windows, and a flash of red and green as it went roaring into the darkness. Nor has any sound ever thrilled me like the weird, melancholy whistle of a distant engine, far off in the loneliness of the night. There is music in the clanging of the engine bell, too, — now loud, now soft, now high, now low, — and not a little melody in the unintelligible chant of those who call the trains in city stations. And then, what is more beautiful in its symbolism than those two parallel ribbons of steel that stretch away, straight and shining, to the ever-receding far horizon?

Again, consider how many weary hearts this same train has borne homeward — how many eager, hopeful hearts it has carried on to an unguessed future of success or failure. Picture how many khaki-clad soldiers it has taken to war, and how many — but how many fewer — it has brought back again. That newly married couple two seats ahead, whose vulgar "mushing" you so justly scorn, have found on the train the crowning of their romance. And that wistful-eyed girl with the pinched face and the peculiar clothes, whom you have just registered as a "hayseed," is drinking in her first glimpse of real life from the window of this car. And that "gob" over there in the corner is thinking thoughts not far different from those of weather-beaten Odysseus landing at last on the shores of Ithaca.

From the seat behind, a high-pitched voice exclaims: "Oh, Susanna, does n't car-riding bore you *stiff!*"

C. W. B.

IN GREEN PASTURES

When buds get red on maples and the spring winds are fragrant with rain and dank soil, my thoughts go back to the enchanted days of my childhood. With us spring was a glorious time of brushwood fires, care-free roamings in wood and pastures, soaked and muddied clothes. Wild and free as young crows we wandered. The blessed season began with the rains. Very clearly I seem to see a girl of eight and a boy of ten standing at a window with their faces pressed against the glass, watching the slanting rain. They chant that old invocation sacred to childhood, "April showers, bring May flowers."

When the rain finally did stop, my mother let us children out with many exhortations to keep out of the mud and not get wet. Straight as our young legs could carry us, we made for the part of the town where gutters ran swiftest. In the dirty rushing water we sailed our chip boats. Now they were vessels exploring the Amazon under tangled forests; now they were tramp steamers, tossing on the Mississippi, or Spanish galleons pursued by buccaneers. Till the mill whistles blew at six o'clock we played, guiding our barks with sticks in and out among the drifting flotsam and jetsam of leaves and straws. At dark, with shoes gurgling, clothes bedraggled, we crept home, all too miserably certain of the hearty Scotch blessing that awaited us. Frequently I escaped, being then a sickly child; but for Jim, who was a sturdy lad, there was no deliverance. He was subject to terrible attacks of croup that filled the whole family with dread. I know now that it was the fear of the gasping cries, the bobbing lights, the hurrying footsteps, and all the hundred dim terrors that walk in darkness

when there is a child sick in the house that made our mother punish severely — not anger because of soiled garments.

We children very early became thoroughly grounded in the Ten Commandments by dint of being pent in on bright afternoons and holidays, though I never could see that our painfully acquired knowledge did us much good, since Grown-Ups had an entirely separate code of their own. Chief and awful among their Ten was, "Thou shalt not get thy feet wet." But on the morrow, old spankings forgot, we sallied out anew to the soggy pastures. What mattered it that dirty snowbanks still lingered in the hollows, that no flowers bloomed, and only the crow's hoarse alarm was heard over the sodden fields? We sniffed the fragrance of sap and bursting buds and felt the bound of young life in our racing blood.

Pussy-willows were held very high among us as a sign. They came out earliest on a very steep bank. At risk of slipping into a sloughy pool at the foot, we scrambled up the acclivity and broke off armfuls of the pussy-willows. Every year I stripped off the gray catkins, and put them in a little box which I kept near or under the kitchen stove. I firmly believed that subject to warmth and other favoring conditions, the pussy-willows would turn into real kittens. The more shrivelled and dried the buds became, the more hopefully I looked for the astonishing metamorphosis that should make me mistress of at least half a dozen frolicsome kittens. My mother never laughed, patiently stumbled over the boxes for a week or more, and finally, when my interest turned elsewhere, quietly dumped them into the stove.

The woods and pastures near our home were rich in almost every wild flower known in New England. We children always went for flowers in groups of six or eight. I think, of all the flowers of spring, I loved the hepaticas

best. They were so frail and appeared so early. We always came upon them just at the foot of a slope, growing near an icy pool. There were only a few of them, not enough to go round, and we fought fiercely for them. Even when we had them, they wilted before we got home, so fragile were they. I can see them now, just piercing up through the sodden mold, their pale lavender and pink blossoms jewel-like against the dark earth. Almost as soon as picked they died in our hands. They have always seemed to me like a symbol of the ethereal, the unattainable, they were so, so . . .

We children had hereditary "spots." It was customary when one grew up to hand down to another child the secret of its location, for these possessions were enjoyed privily, like a miser's gold. I had such an inheritance, a "spot" of mayflowers in an old fence-corner. Of course I knew precisely where my spot was, but I liked to reach it circuitously, finding a pleasure in delaying my joy for a bit. When I finally stood breathless before the trailing loveliness, I gave a little rapturous cry, fell on my knees and began picking with boorish haste.

It often happened that when we were hunting for flowers in groups, a child would come upon an unusually fine "spot" of flowers. She sprang forward shrieking, "Tick-tock, my door is locked," at the same time waving her arms vaguely about to indicate the boundaries of her claim. Thus were our claims staked out, and it was a bold spirit who dared to jump another's claim, for we always defended our rights with fists and hair-pulling.

We children had a Natural History of our own as quaint as any found in *Euphues*. Puffballs cured bleeding, gold-thread likewise was medicinal; while beans, if stolen without knowledge of another mortal soul, then rubbed on warts, removed them like magic. A horse-hair in a bottle of water turned into a snake. Blue-eyed-grass, steeped

with another herb and the brew drunk, had the remarkable virtue of making one invisible. But we could never find that other unknown quantity. True, we experimented long and tirelessly with every herb of the field, but in vain. The missing link remained forever undiscovered.

Of all wild creatures, snakes aroused in us most curiosity, and unfortunately for them, the most hatred. One spring an old stone-wall was torn down in the pasture where we were accustomed to pick mayflowers. Thus whole families of snakes were expelled from house and home, much to our glee. Under the pretext of picking flowers, we went on snake hunts. With what zest we pursued a war of extermination against the whole reptile family! We watched for them to come out of their holes, dug for them, and clubbed them to death with the phlegm of a Jesuit accomplishing his mission. In later years, when I came to study the Spanish Inquisition, I had only to recall the zeal with which we hunted down and destroyed these harmless denizens of the earth, to understand. One afternoon we had an unusually successful hunt. An entire family had been done to death and now lay at our feet going through their last writhings. We, some six or eight young barbarians, squatted about in a circle and solemnly discussed whether it were true that a dead snake would wriggle until sun-down (there was such a legend). "I've heard, too," spoke up one of our band, "that if you cut up a snake, each part will turn into a new snake and crawl off whole." Some were credulous, others derisive, but the imagination of each was fired. "Let's try it!" "Oh, yes!" we shouted. A dainty little maid — one of those children over whom mothers bend at night and fear premature death is written on the too cherubic countenance — produced a pair of scissors brought to cut flowers, and snipped the squirming reptile into inch pieces, all of us watching breathlessly. We regarded the vivisected parts hopefully for some min-

utes, but nothing happened. We were disgusted. We had been "stung" again! "I'll tell you," spoke up the boy who had first proposed the surgery, "I dare all you girls to pick up the pieces."

That man, as he develops, exhibits all the stages of civilization, I have understood very well, recalling that day. We were all little better than savages. I can see now the breathless circle of children, one by one each of them stepping forward and taking up the challenge. I think I must have been emerging somewhat from barbarism, for I remember hanging back, hoping I should escape notice. Foolish hope, indeed! I was seen and pushed forward with, "Now it's your turn." I set my teeth and accepted the ordeal, for like all children, more than any torture I dreaded the taunt, "Fraid-cat!" Ugh — I can feel the clammy smoothness clinging to my fingers yet.

One spring our poor mother was very ill, and had to go to the hospital. We children were left in the charge of a large deaf old lady known in the neighborhood as Gran'ma Barton. We ran very wild that spring. To be sure, she did her duty by us, boxed our ears when it was necessary, gave us bread and milk for supper, and heard our prayers. For the rest, we did as we pleased. That was why it was so easy for us to become syrup merchants. There was a grove of young maples and chestnuts near by. Socialists of the first water, it was a matter of utmost indifference to us to whom the trees belonged. Some five or six of us youngsters proposed to tap those trees, — from which, of course, the sap would flow as from a fountain, — build a fire out-doors, and boil down the sap, thus supplying the whole town with syrup and netting a rich profit for ourselves. No sooner was the plan conceived than we set to work. Jim pillaged the auger and hammer from father's tool chest, while I looted the kitchen of pails. It is not necessary to remark that Gran'ma Barton was not present

at these devastations. We hurried to the grove and quickly began to bore the trees. But what were we to do for spouts? We looked around us. Jim suggested the sumach that grew on the slope above the hepatica bed, because of its pith. That question was settled when up spoke a cautious little girl: "How do you know whether or not it's white sumach, and if it is, it will poison us." Here was a problem. The council squatted and deliberated. Just then a brilliant thought struck me. "Why, I saw red blossoms on that sumach last fall, so it must be red sumach and not white." Here was proof. The council broke up with a sigh of relief. Nothing now stood in our way. The sap merchants set to work. But somehow we did not become immediately prosperous. The sap, instead of gushing forth like water from Moses' rock, came only in niggardly drops, for in our ignorance we had tapped young trees, many of them white maples. At night the big boys stole our sap. But finally a meagre gallon of promiscuous mixture filled a very black kettle which we swung on a rickety crane over a capricious fire. The fire went out, not prospering on green twigs and damp leaves; pine needles fell into the brew; the crane broke and let the kettle fall into the fire; and the merchants fell out of temper. The consummation of all our hopes was a few sticky licks of syrup around, and the sap merchants dissolved partnership.

The next day Jim dislocated his shoulder, and I was in bed with the grippe. Then mother returned. Scarcely able to stand herself, she arose from her sick bed to care for us and immediately things were right again. "I see you have been playing in the water again," she said to me reproachfully. "Are n't you ever going to learn better?"

When the spring fever got into our veins, we wandered over woods and pastures, irresponsible as the wind. Often our roamings took us from home the entire day. Not that our parents applauded these vagrancies; on the contrary,

they were the cause of many sound thrashings. But Scotch children learn to take their whippings like the rain — something that has to be put up with and forgotten as soon as over. One Mecca of our wanderings was the Enchanted Forest. I don't know why it was so called, except that it was the favorite haunt of lovers. The pines stood very close together there and were forever mysteriously sighing. While in the Enchanted Forest we children walked softly and continually looked for witches, gnomes, fairy princes that might come stepping out of the thick shadows.

Beyond the Enchanted Forest was the Hoosac Tunnel. We loved to go there and sit on the top of the high stone arch at the entrance. At risk of breaking our necks by pitching forward onto the tracks, we hung over the edge to watch the trains come out. When we heard the distant rumble inside the mountain, we clasped hands and our hearts thumped hard. The roar grew, and finally the train came rushing out of the black hole, and we, sitting high up on the arch, were wreathed in smoke like a Pythia above an oracle. Ah, glorious would be the days when we too should ride through the mountain!

All this fades and dies away. When I walk abroad in field or pasture there is no more glamour, no magic in herb and flower, no enchantment in the shadows of the forest, no call in the spring rain. Yet sometimes, when I see bright waters leap, or smell the soft wet wind, I seem to hear again the pipes of Pan calling, calling, to the land

> Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
> Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
> Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue,
>
> . . . . .
>
> And the lonely of heart is withered away.

R. A. McD.

A GROUP OF SHORT EDITORIALS

A MINOR TRAGEDY

The Nation (New York)

Eccentric crows, they say, collect shiny bits of glass and pottery. Many a savage has bartered his birthright to a wily white man for beads and calico. The instinct lurks in us all; the collecting mania leads the modern urchin to adorn his coat with buttons and to amass cigarette pictures of baseball heroes. But the king of all the follies to which the madness drives men is stamp-collecting. There is no corner of Europe so hungry and starving to-day but men find time and money to assemble these bits of inky colored-paper. When barter was reëstablished in Moscow, among the first of the long-suppressed merchants to discover his goods was the vendor of stamps. Europe's new midget republics finance themselves in Central American style by selling new stamp-issues to philatelists; no freebooter proclaims a new empire, be it in Fiume, Silesia, or Baranya, but among his first acts is the issue and sale of stamps to hungry dealers. And among the minor tragedies of this age which has such cosmic major tragedies was the dispersal of the stamp-collection of Philippe de Ferrari de la Renotière.

Philippe de Ferrari was the son of that Marquis of Ferrari to whom Victor Emmanuel gave the title of Prince of Duccedio, and the Pope that of Duke of Galliera. The father died a half century ago, leaving an enormous fortune made in French railroad finance. His widow founded a hospital at Clamart, gave twenty-five million francs to the city of Genoa for its harbor, and a palace besides, gave to Austria — for an Embassy — her Paris palace, and seven or eight million francs to the German empress, and still

left her son a rich man. But Philippe scorned his class and despised the origin of his wealth; he developed principles which forbade him to live on unearned wealth and for a time taught in the École Libre des Sciences Politiques. But one ruling passion gradually undermined all his other principles. He had a passion for stamps. His days he passed haunting the stamp market on the Avenue Marigny. His collection came to rival that of Alexander III and that of Dr. Legrand; this scorner of inherited wealth bought outright the stamp collection of one of the Rothschilds. In his latter years another worry possessed him: what would become of his collection when he died? For a long time he earnestly considered willing it to the Pope. Fate deprived him of choice. He had, in one of his caprices, let himself be adopted by an Austrian officer, — de la Renotière, — and when the war broke out, he was technically an Austrian. Before the war was over, he had died in Geneva; and his collection, sequestrated as enemy-property by the French, has been sold at auction and dispersed. At least he had the philatelic consolation that his 1851 two-cent Hawaiian blue brought the largest price till then ever paid for a stamp — 183,300 francs. . . .

Stamp-collecting is a modern business, ancient though the acquisitive instinct be. In 1863 the Paris lawyer, Henri Dabot, wrote: "A new insanity has caught the heads of Parisians; they are collecting — what do you think? Steel pens? No. Buttons? No. Ink-smeared, used stamps!"

THAT $30,000 STAMP

Boston Herald

Old postage-stamps occasionally turn up in disused desks or forgotten drawers, and the householder who finds one of them worth so much as a ten-dollar bill thinks himself in luck. A postage stamp of British Guiana, worth $27,000, long known as the rarest in the world, has just been sold to a Swiss collector who paid that sum for it, with taxation surcharge added, at a public auction in Paris. It was only of one-cent denomination, — a tiny bit of carmine-colored paper with the "one cent" on it printed in black, — yet what a record it had before finally coming under the hammer! Discovered in the colony by a young man named Vaughan — in 1873 — as the "only known copy," it found its way to England in 1878, was first sold for a few shillings as a philatelic curiosity, then finally purchased by the late Baron de la Renotière von Ferrary[1] for a little more than $500. He deposited it in his world-famous collection, and it remained there for forty-four years.

In the interval, rumors that another copy existed sent collectors scurrying over the two hemispheres in search of the coveted treasure. While they were gone an alleged copy — for which 20,000 francs were asked — came to grief in France through being denounced by experts as an absurd forgery. When the war broke out Baron von Ferrary returned to Germany, bequeathed his collection to the Berlin museum, and died in 1917. Ever since, his property

[1] When he changed his citizenship from French to Austrian, Philippe de Ferrari de la Renotière probably changed the form of his name to de la Renotière von Ferrary, so that both forms are correct. — Editor.

has been under sequestration, and the proceeds of its sale, including the amount yielded by the British Guiana stamp, are to be paid to the Reparations account.

Strange indeed have been the adventures of adhesive stamps since the first of them was invented nearly a century ago by James Chalmers of Dundee. The British Parliament sanctioned their use in 1840, and it took little more than a decade to extend their use for postal purposes to the rest of Europe and to various parts of the American continent. Early enough they gave rise to the stamp collector, the stamp album, and the stamp catalogue; to-day there are scores of books dealing with stamps, and it takes one work in two bulky volumes to protect the buyer by giving the story of the forgeries of stamps.

Why should people accumulate these squares and oblongs, the proper use of which is to be affixed to correspondence? "Fad" such collecting has been called; but think of it as a source of information and entertainment. A fairly rich collection tells of the vicissitudes of States, sometimes of the rise and fall of forms of government. Great national events are often perpetuated by "commemoration" stamps. Others teach political and economical lessons. Look on the new Bolshevist issues, ranging from 7500 to 22,500 rubles. Stamps often carry pictures of crowned heads, presidents of republics, army generals; of fair cities, of landscapes and sea views. The latest output of Egypt reproduces the colossal statue of Ramses II at Thebes; the newest Armenian stamp, the plain and mountain of Ararat, with a native ploughing in the foreground. Something of all this, with the law of supply and demand taken into account, may help to explain why the largest sum ever paid for a postage stamp has just changed hands at Paris.

ON CRUELTY TO PLESIOSAURI

Boston Evening Transcript

It seems that in the Argentine they have a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Plesiosauri. The association which in Buenos Aires corresponds to our S.P.C.A. has protested earnestly against the carrying out of a supposed intention on the part of certain men of science to find, and if possible, bring out with them, a strange creature, supposed to be a survival of an antediluvian form of existence, the presence of which has been reported in a lake in the highlands of Argentine Patagonia. The Buenos Aires Society's objection is purely on the score of cruelty to animals. Creatures of any sort from that singular and little known region do not ordinarily survive when brought northward, and the benevolent gentlemen of Buenos Aires argue that it would be inexcusable cruelty either to kill or to attempt to remove in a live state any plesiosaurus, ichthyosaurus, or other saurotergia found in the Andean fastnesses.

Aside from interest in this curious solicitude for the comfort of a creature whose existence has not been demonstrated, and which is probably imaginary, the Buenos Aires proceeding raises several interesting questions. The region Andes-ward from that part of Argentine which was known to the old-time geographers as Patagonia (no such territorial designation is now in use) is very little known. The Andes themselves, in this region, are not only uninhabitable but practically unexplorable, from the fact that in them the rain falls every day in the year, and human life is unsupportable, or nearly so. In the superhumid depths of the mountains, looking toward the Pacific, the

earth is covered with dense forests, interspersed with bottomless morasses, and the ground offers no footing for man or beast. The Argentine side of the mountains is for the most part less sodden, less constantly washed by torrential rains than the Chilean side, but the boundary between the two countries is purely theoretical. If there is any part of the world where strange and antediluvian forms of life might indeed be found surviving, it is undoubtedly this general region. At all events the flora and fauna of the southern Andes are very diverse from those of other and more temperate regions in either hemisphere.

These southern Andes surely invite scientific exploration. Darwin, indeed, explored those portions of them which were immediately accessible from the sea. His discoveries were noteworthy, and his report on the region is the best authority upon its conditions to this day. But no means of successfully combating the extraordinary natural conditions of the region is known to men of science. If there are in existence these important forms of life which are extinct in other parts of the world, their value to science would be so great, and their story in connection with the history of species would be so enormously important, as to justify any means of bringing them out, whether the creatures found were alive or dead. It is to be hoped that the Argentine authorities — or the Chilean authorities, if this assumed pool turns out to be their side of the line — will not share in the extreme solicitude for the monsters' bodily comfort, but will let the scientists go in under any terms whatsoever. In any case, the scientists are likely to suffer more than the plesiosaurus does.

SOME MYSTERIES OF THE SEA

Ohio State Journal

ROMANCE and mystery have not been taken from the high seas, even with the many inventions of man that help annihilate space and permit communication with the world in its far-away places. During the last year twenty-six vessels that left port for a voyage failed to arrive at their destinations. They steamed away and disappeared. What fate they met, how it came and where, all are a part of the mystery of the sea.

Probably some mine — planted during the war and not picked up when peace came — broke loose from its moorings, was caught up by the great ocean currents, and was carried out into the lanes of travel. Probably other vessels will be in collision with the lost mines, for there are many not yet accounted for. Each mine may mean another mystery of the sea. The inventions of man have done much to make safer the navigation of the wide waters, but all the inventions of man thus far have not operated to take from the sea the mystery that has enveloped it since sailing first began.

HUNTING BURIED TREASURE

San Francisco Chronicle

Of all the will-o'-the-wisps which this world pursues, none, perhaps, has been more bedazzling or more universal in its enticement than buried treasure.

A yellowed chart of a pirate cave on some far-off island, the bearings of a pot of gold S.S.W. from the blasted tree, will charm money out of a hidebound business-man and send ordinarily shrewd and prudent pluggers to roast, and starve, and thirst, and blister on desert isles at the ends of the earth.

And those of us who do not contribute or go satisfy our souls by reading *Treasure Island.*

Of all the places where these tales of pirate gold have found a local habitation the chief is Cocos Island, whither, even at this moment, a band of American treasure-seekers is hopefully wending.

Cocos Island — a speck of land some five miles offshore in the bight of Panama — is the great focus of pirate yarns. If we were to believe them, all this islet must have been the club, the convention hall, the "hang-out" of all the pirates in all the centuries. One of the commonest tales is that here was buried a vast amount of treasure from the churches of Lima. Another is that here Sir Henry Morgan hid the loot of Panama, out of which, as it is well known, he bilked his crew. It makes no difference that Morgan was never in the Pacific and only saw it from Panama — the story clings and so do its believers.

More money probably has been spent on treasure-hunting expeditions to Cocos Island than any pirate ever had. It is said that a cave exists there in which one searcher

found bones, and scraps, and leavings to indicate that desperate characters had been there.

Each new hunter is sure he has the only correct chart. The delusion is perennial. But even as we laugh at the rainbow-chasers, is there one of us who would not like to go along?

A STREET SCENE

"JOURNEYMAN" in *The Freeman*

SPEAKING of our city streets, I came upon a pleasant sight the other day. I heard, while still half a block away from its source, a wheezy, cheerful tune, which I took for the asthmatical chirpings of an ancient hurdy-gurdy; but on rounding the corner I found it to be something much more wonderful, an itinerant merry-go-round for children. It was, of course, on a very miniature scale, but that did not lessen its manifold delights. The diminutive prancing chargers, fenced in with a light railing, had each a small rider, holding on tight or proudly nonchalant according to size and experience; and alongside stood a mob of little ones in agonies of impatience, awaiting their turn for a ride. Meanwhile, the owner of this magnificent enterprise blandly supervised with the air of a ringmaster his present and prospective customers. He might have come off the Avenue de Neuilly. The whole contrivance was cunningly arranged on four wheels, took up no more room than an ordinary cart, and was drawn by an old white horse, who, with his head turned over his shoulder, languidly watched the proceedings with the kindly tolerance of old age.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S HOT-WATER PIPES

Chicago Tribune

The Duke of Wellington in 1834 was in a position to enjoy the fruits of a crowded career as a successful soldier and statesman. He had wealth, prestige, and leisure, and probably was a little bored. Among other things, he had a house. Probably it was huge and damp, and the duke was feeling twinges of rheumatism as he mended the fire. Seeking comfort, his idle imagination was stimulated. He determined to improve his condition. The result was a hot-water heating-system, which was such a novelty as to warrant the inspection and admiration of his friends.

Probably the pipes leaked, the pressure was irregular, and the duke shivered at one hour and sweated at another, but out of his wealth and leisure he "started something." Without leisure to plan the experiment and wealth to pay for it, he would have gone along with an open fire or a stove. As it was, he gave the necessary stimulus to a system which now probably makes more than half the homes, apartment houses, factories, and office buildings in the world habitable.

What was a luxury to be enjoyed by but one is now a commonplace in every home.

The same remark applies to numberless accessories of modern life. The bathtub, for instance, was originally a pure luxury, evolved from the imagination of some pampered and wealthy and idle man or woman of the European leisure-class. His demand originated it and his money paid for it. To-day it is a necessity in every home. The same might be said of gaslight, electric light, gas stoves,

telephones, automobiles, and most of the other comforts and conveniences of life.

A wealthy leisure-class has time for the play of imagination and money with which to make its dreams come true. And, coming true, they become commonplace and go into the homes of the poor. It is by no means all bad. Without it, and without the rewards which the catering to its whims offers to private enterprise, there would be little progress.

EXPLORERS OF THE COMMON MIND

New York Times

THE experts have lately been spending a great deal of time over the ways of testing pupils. Some have discarded the "marks" of the old examinations as fallible evidence of intelligence and power. Some have turned from the practices of the augurs in making use of answers to chance flights of catch-questions, and insist upon examining the examiners. Certain newly devised tests disclose the superiority of ordinary freshmen to successful university presidents. This either implies a tremendous improvement of the present generation over the past, or suggests that there has been something wrong in former methods of scrutinizing educational progress.

Now rises one of the most discerning, — Professor William C. Bagley of Teachers College, Columbia University, — and intimates that, even if we can determine the mediocrity of a child of twelve, the dooming of him to narrow training for routine work only is contrary to the ideal of democracy. Democratic development has been toward elevating the common man to a position "of supreme collective control." It is therefore, says Professor Bagley, "a race between education and annihilation." Scientific measurement is essential, but it should not attempt to cast the horoscope of an individual at twelve. According to statistics quoted by Commissioner Grave at the same meeting in Chicago, 47.3 per cent of the white men in the draft were "morons": that is, while adults in years, they had the mental age of from seven to twelve years. What is needed educationally is such a continued exploring of the common mind as will ensure the lifting of

the children of twelve to higher levels of thinking and feeling. But this does not mean that we are not to find some way of discerning and an effective way of training for leadership the genius that lives in every nation.

EFFICIENCY IS NOT ALL

Independent and Weekly Review

Efficiency is not the whole of life, and it is time that serious thought were given to something that goes far beyond the question of the trustworthiness of the tests, or the immediate advantage gained by their use. If we are entering upon a régime in which children are going to be labeled and graded, not according to what they know, but according to what — by the inexorable pronouncement of a self-registering machine — they inherently are, what is going to be the effect of all this upon those children's outlook on life? It is true that, even as things are, every sensible child has a pretty sure consciousness of his own inferiority to his more gifted comrades; but it is one thing to know this in a general way, and quite another to have that knowledge burned into his consciousness as a scientific and incontestable fact, to say nothing of its being stamped upon him as a fatal brand to be carried through life. Whatever precautions are taken to disguise or conceal the verdict, we may be quite sure that if, as now promises to be the case, the scheme of psychological tests is to be made a fundamental part of our educational system, its results will be no secret to the individual child most concerned, nor to those with whom he is most closely associated.

Whether the gain to be looked for — either in collective efficiency or in personal comfort of the individual — outweighs the loss, is a question upon which it is hopeless to look for general agreement; and this not so much because of the differences of opinion concerning facts as because of differences of judgment concerning values. How are you

going to measure the injury inflicted upon an individual by lessening his courage, his self-esteem, his ambition, his belief — illusory, perhaps, but none the less vital and effective — that sometime, somehow, he will show that there is more in him than people think, more in him than he has yet been able to prove even to himself? These qualities, these thoughts, are in themselves precious; and millions of plain people cling to them through life, in spite of all the blows of destiny. How much gain in the shape of increased success will it be necessary to secure in order to balance the loss of the consolations for failure? How much in order to justify the sacrifice of that feeling of fundamental equality which is the great sweetener of human intercourse?

NEED OF SELECTION IN EDUCATION

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

The National Students' Advisory Board formally advises all German high-school pupils not to go to college, but to learn a trade instead. It pleads: "Our nation lacks bread for its many workers, while the academic professions are overcrowded. Thousands of college men are already forced to earn their living by manual labor."

The problem suggested here is not distinctively a German problem. There is not a country of Continental Europe, outside of Holland and the Scandinavian group, where the same reasoning would not apply in greater or less degree. In America, as in Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, the issue is at least delayed, but how long delayed we cannot possibly conjecture.

It has been figured that in modern civilization, to keep things going, fully eighty per cent of the population must live on the proceeds of work with the human hands. Even though all children go to school, and nearly all aspire to a professional or soft-handed life, basic conditions will remain unaltered. It is a simple mathematical proposition that the vast majority of the aspirants will fail and will therefore be disappointed. But that a larger proportion than twenty per cent will succeed in making their way into the professions is almost certain; and that is a condition not wholly negligible in the United States, even now.

We need, as England needs, and France needs, and Germany needs, the principle of selection in the rudimentary schools, the picking of those children whom a higher education will really help. But we need also a spirit of encouragement for the prospective manual-workers, a stress-

ing of the dignity of doing anything well, and fuller recognition of the fact that the school ought to give every child an appreciation of beauty, of art, of music, of books, that will go with him through life, whether he is a ditch-digger or a bank president. The college diploma is not necessary. The college is not necessary. Modern development, which tends always toward lowering the money rewards of the soft-handed occupations and increasing the rewards of mechanical workers, also tends toward giving the latter short enough hours to leave them time for reading and study. And the education that is never finished is far better than that which terminates with the Commencement Day at Yale or Harvard or Princeton.

THE CASE OF ONE POOR YOUNG MAN

New York Herald

With practically a unanimous vote, the recent conference in Washington on educational requirements for admission to the bar went on record with the declaration that the law student should have at least two years of college training to his credit in addition to the regular law-school course. For this conclusion the legal profession of the country is largely indebted to Elihu Root, who overcame what at the outset of the discussion seemed to promise to be a formidable opposition.

The opposition was based chiefly on a plea for the poor young man with natural ability enough to become a good lawyer but without money for a preliminary college education. This point was urged by several speakers, but Mr. Root's statement of existing professional conditions and his appeal for their improvement convinced the conference of the desirability of the proposed requirement. Evidently the opinion of the conference was that if a young man lacked money for a college education the way was open for him to make up the deficit by working. Moreover, a young man's will to work his way through the required years of college training was regarded as in itself a character-building quality of as much value, perhaps, as the book-learning involved.

In the case of John C. O'Brien, whom Governor Cox has just appointed district attorney of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, there is striking evidence in support of this view. Mr. O'Brien is thirty-five years old. His father was a foreman with a small salary in one of the Boston city departments. He had a large family. John C. O'Brien at

the age of fourteen made up his mind to have an education. He worked every day as a ticket clerk for the Boston and Albany Railroad while he was attending the Boston Latin School. When admitted to Harvard he was working as a brakeman on the same railroad.

After graduation he entered the Harvard Law School. During his legal studies he continued as a brakeman, getting up at 5.30 in the morning and making a run to Framingham and back before going to the classroom. In the evening, after the day's session of the Law School was over, he made a run to Springfield and back. Incidentally, during his college course, he won the Boylston prize for oratory. And now the *Boston Transcript* says of his appointment to the district attorneyship that it is one "that quickens the pride of the average citizen, stimulates his own sense of responsibility, heartens his hope in the future, and reflects on the appointing power great and everlasting credit."

FOR BETTER LEGAL TRAINING

New York Evening Post

SHALL the United States, whose greatest jurist, John Marshall, had only a few weeks' college training under Wythe, and some of whose first statesmen, like Lincoln and Clay, never breathed academic air, require a college degree as a preliminary to law study? Chief Justice Taft tells the national conference of bar associations that it should. He holds that the country has too many lawyers and can insist on full academic training without making them too few. Elihu Root asks for at least two years of academic training.

For the present Mr. Root's proposal is a sufficient goal at which to aim. In 1920, according to the Carnegie Foundation, only three law schools required a college degree prior to admission — those of Northwestern, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania. Six other schools required three years of academic work, which in general is sufficient study for a degree. No less than twenty-three required two years, or more even than the number — twenty-one — demanding a single year. This was out of a total of one hundred and twenty-six schools. The greater state universities, which are in close touch with the sentiment of the public and the profession, — Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Minnesota, — called for two years of general college study.

Twenty years ago a campaign was begun for the elimination of profit-making medical schools which poured out a stream of incompetents to play ducks and drakes with human lives. In spite of protests from sections where law schooling preserves much of the ungirt, easy quality of

frontier days, a similar reform will benefit the field of law. On behalf of the poor boy protest is made against the "iniquity" of requiring good preliminary education; but it is just the poor who suffer most from shysters, as they suffer most from medical quacks. The time should be hastened when no one can become a lawyer who does not have the knowledge of history, literature, and science implied in two years of general college-training.

A PORTRAIT BY HOLBEIN

Boston Evening Transcript

In the current number of an illustrated weekly there is most excellently reproduced in color the wonderful Portrait of a Young Man in the State Museum at Vienna. Looking at it, even as it is here on this thin paper and with the unavoidable imperfections of mechanical reproduction, one feels the amplitude and the tranquillity of genius. The head might be that of a Bavarian or a Southern Austrian or an Italian; the set of the somewhat sleepy eyes, the bones of the face, the shape of the nose, the plump and smallish hands, are none of them of the British Isles.

Holbein happened to be a genius, but genius or talented in his day had to work hard and take pains. When a man like Holbein took these pains, you had a piece of work like the Portrait, which is a reminder of the real man's majesty. It makes no difference whether we regard the painting of the eyebrows or of the full, wine-colored sleeves: we see a production that is a stinging rebuke to those who profess to believe that in art somewhere, somehow, work can be avoided. From the contemplation of this picture one turns to some of the South Sea Island School of painting, and a little marvels at the avidity with which men gorge the second-rate.

It is no mere laudation of days gone by or querulous discontent with things as they seem to be, if one affirm that on all sides are seen the results of a way of thinking that, by some queer distortion of the human mind, puts reward apart from work. The whole country is infected with the virus of this mistake and is hobbling from the results of work not thoroughly done. Many if not all of the labor

organizations, so-called, are such in name only. They are not interested in labor; their be-all and their end-all is wages. One would have to look far and wide to find pride in good work. Yet good work not only is the most vitally essential thing in the economy of a democracy, but is the great token of the individual's self-respect. About the tranquil, masterly work of genius there is what can be called no less than majesty; it is so assured, it makes no outcry for attention, but shows what it can do and is content. About such work, if you have the courage to put wage-scales to one side and regard man's possibilities, you notice the characteristic that it does not patronize. It is the clever, brilliant men, who sadly need to have their combs cut, who do the patronizing. The great merchant or painter or soldier or writer does not patronize, but encourages.

So this Portrait shows what can be done. It was painted not much short of four centuries ago and is the expression of an imperishable fact — the glory of man's genius above any machine, yet a genius that equally must labor before it has its reward. When many butterfly achievements of standardization and the stencil-plate have been blown away, a mass of second-rate and undignified dust, the honest work of genius will still be found the same as ever, calm, and lovely, and strong, and knowing neither youth nor age.

APTITUDES AND ATTITUDES

Boston Herald

THE phrase in the title is not ours — it originated with Dr. Samuel V. Cole, president of Wheaton College, who recently gave it to his students as the foundation upon which to build their careers. But it is a phrase that may well prove a useful agent in our national laboratory of business, in the analysis and possible checking of an epidemic known as slipshodmania.

No doubt you have heard, as we often have, remarks somewhat to this effect: "Those men never do a job right the first time"; or, "That one ought to have his license revoked"; or again, "They lose things in that laundry!" "I wish editorial writers used some brains"; or, "Why do women hire out for cleaning when they don't know the first thing about it?" And we could cite ever so many more. The answer is — slipshodmania.

"Have an aptitude for the thing you do, and have an attitude of respect or reverence toward it," admonishes Dr. Cole.

Some people learn the motions of their work without ever bothering to study the meaning of those motions; such are doubtless working without an aptitude for their jobs. On the other hand, perhaps the greater failures are the persons who, having an aptitude for their work, have the wrong attitude. They do a poor job, knowing it to be poor, but they lack respect for their own handiwork, and have so little thought for their fellow beings, that they are willing to waste their time doing something worthless.

There have been many analyses of the failure of Americans successfully to compete with Europeans for South

American business. Just before the Great War an American merchant, returning from Europe, made the acquaintance on shipboard of a German merchant. Of course they talked shop. Said the German to the American: "We are competing for the contract covering that shipment of engines; but my firm will get the business, even if your price is lower, because the customer knows that when we make a delivery he can set up his engines and use them; but deliveries from your country are rarely complete, and the consignee is then delayed weeks and weeks, while he waits for the arrival of perhaps some trivial part that was missing." And the German firm did get the business.

So it is in many instances where American work comes in contact with that of Europeans, be it in competition in the world's markets or in competition on some piece of labor at home. Is it the aptitude or the attitude that is wrong? Has our education, our training, been faulty or wrong? Certainly here in New England people have known how to do thorough work. Is that thoroughness to develop into self-righteous hardness and to be nothing more?

In mediæval times people approached their work with prayer. Whether it was ultimately viewed by the many or the few, it was all, no matter how it might be hidden, seen by God; and it was done primarily for God.

When we were knee-high to grasshoppers we were taught: "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well." All else is waste.

BUILDING CATHEDRALS

Omaha Bee

MODERN civilization, one might truly say, is based on the home. Back of the home, often almost submerged in drudgery, is the mother. Yet to the best of mothers, however hard pressed by domestic duties, life is an achievement more than a task. Cooking is not merely the preparation of food, nor sweeping simply chasing dust, nor is the teaching of cleanliness, religion, and love for the beautiful in nature and art only toil. All these things go to the strengthening of civilization.

The spirit of the housewife is needed throughout every activity of modern life. Whatever the task to which fate has assigned one, it has its connections with something greater. To view it thus is to find joy in work and to gain in craftsmanship.

Three men, all engaged at the same employment, were asked what they were doing. One said he was making five dollars a day. Another replied that he was cutting stone. The third said he was building a cathedral. The difference was not in what they were actually doing, although the spirit of the third might quite possibly have made him more expert at his task. They were all earning the same wage; they were all cutting stone; but only one held it in his mind that he was helping build a great edifice. Life meant more to him than to his mates, because he saw further and more clearly.

The farmer may be only planting seed, but if he opens his eyes he is feeding the world. The railroad man, the factory hand, the clerk in the store, likewise are building their cathedrals. The investors in stocks and bonds, the

executives of great corporations — they are building cathedrals likewise, if only they can catch the vision. The housewife does not count the dollars she receives for her exertions. If she did, her life would be unhappy indeed. The rest of us, the great figures of the industrial world more than the humble ones, are thinking too much about such things as cutting stone and making profits, fully to be realizing the beauty of life.

CHOICES

Philadelphia Public Ledger

All through life we must keep choosing. Destiny hangs on "yes" and "no." As we look back, it is to wonder what would have happened if we had gone the other way when the road forked.

Many of us feel misplaced in a vocation. We keep on in the furrow where we are, because it seems too late to change or because there are some whose welfare we cannot jeopardize. We chide ourselves that we made a wrong decision long ago.

On life's bargain-counter are wares piled up for the pleasing of all tastes. We marvel that some eagerly select what we contemptuously reject. In other people's houses we find a style of furnishing that we could not agree to live with. Music or painting or literature that is meat for one mind is poison for another. Our tastes are as various as our natures. The spiritual and the sentimental, the refined and the devout, find a chasm between the things they care to do and the vulgar, soulless pursuits of those who live ephemerally, like the brutes, with no heed to answer anything but the crude, elemental, physical appetites.

How can Nature originate so great a variety of patterns? We speak of the mass of mankind, the proletariat, the public, as if it was all one. But it presents a bewildering variation. Human beings are as different from one another as their parental influences and their environments and their personal natures are different. Flesh and blood can never be run in a mould of monotonous uniformity. The fascination of travel is in the endless variety of man-

kind that one encounters, more than in silent buildings or inarticulate scenery.

The choice of personal associates is the all-influencing choice. To go wrong here is the likeliest way to cripple one's chances of eminence or of plain, everyday success. A man goes into business with partners guilty of malfeasance, and they pull him down. A woman marries the wrong husband, and though her courage may keep her at the sticking point and may enable her to preserve the appearance of domestic felicity, all that makes for the ideal relationship is absent. The basis of happiness is not in things, but in people. Those of us who are thoroughly normal cannot get along without congenial society. The kind of persons we choose to be with is the first and surest indication of character. The worthiest must be uneasy and unhappy in the company of the worst; and the best will naturally seek the best.

What a man chooses, he is.

THE HABIT OF DOING RIGHT

The Minneapolis Journal

THERE is no sufficient reason why a mortal should fret for life against the bars of the Ten Commandments. In a civilization such as we enjoy in America, there is a considerable proportion of the population — those who uphold the high standards of public morals — with whom the Ten Commandments have become ten common habits. To such people it is more agreeable to keep the Commandments than to break them.

It is neither unreasonable nor uncommon for it to be a man's first impulse to do the right thing at every questionable turn, provided he has done it often enough to have formed the habit of doing right. The way of the righteous would be uphill work indeed, if he had to fight his prevailing impulses every time he did that which he recognized as right.

It has been well said that "It is the business of good government to make it as easy as possible for a man to do right and as hard as possible for him to do wrong." If this is true in human government, it must be true in the government of the moral universe. And proof is abundant that the Power behind the Ten Commandments did make the keeping of them more easy and pleasant than the breaking.

It is nothing against the quality of good behavior that it is habitual. We instinctively admire the man to whom good manners and good morals have become a second nature. When mercy and courtesy and the keeping of the law come spontaneously, they come in the richest, most abundant measure and in the most attractive form. An

ideal state is one in which the citizens are instinctively law-abiding.

Good laws, well enforced, are powerful helps to good habits. The Ten Commandments are a component part of the fundamental law of our country; and it is this fact, above others, that has kept us thus far as strong and as dominant as we are in the moral government of the world.

But we may weaken; we may have weakened in our enforcement of habit-forming laws. Under present conditions it has become comparatively easy to steal and to get away with the loot.

It is the business of America to make chastity and honesty voluntarily habitual among its young people; to make these virtues aboundingly popular in society; to make theft and vice appear to be the disgusting, disastrous things they really are.

It is only as the individuals of our country's population establish the habit of doing right that the nation will become at heart outstandingly right, and in fact permanently great.

RELIGION IN POLITICS

The Lewiston Journal

About the last things that people fancy go together are religion and politics. Take the Lewiston municipal election, for instance. It is n't a matter of creeds or sects or dogmas. But, to any right-minded person, it should be a matter of principle.

The understanding of this simple truth makes politics and religion one; for principle is not something which can be left behind in the church pew on Sunday night or confined to the prayer meeting or vesper service. It follows a person right into his home, his social affairs, his private business, and into public affairs, also.

An election, then, can best be understood as a choice of the best possible means of bringing into municipal service the largest demonstration of principle. Candidates should stand or fall on this issue. Voters should cast their ballots with as clear a conception of it as possible.

But principle eliminates graft; it substitutes efficiency for favoritism; it means the largest progress consistent with due economy; it means honesty and service through and through — and that is real religion.

We may miss it again and again, in choice of candidates or in election results; but the fact remains as unalterable as God Himself. Who can doubt or gainsay this? Neither Jew nor Gentile, Catholic nor Protestant.

A SEPARATE RACE

Louisville Courier-Journal

INDEPENDENCE and self-respect are admirable to the observer, and valuable to the independent and self-respecting. But an error is made by the citizen of Omaha who, bidding Omaha cultivate its distinctive qualities, says the Middle West should recognize itself as being "almost a separate land, the home of a separate race, with traditions and ideals unlike those of the rest of America."

Commenting upon this clarion call to local pride, the *News* of St. Joseph, Missouri, laments that the traveler in America is impressed by uniformity rather than by diversity: that America is like Gopher Prairie, anxiously imitative.

Of course Omaha, or any other city or town, would be interesting to the traveler if it were less like any other American city than it is or reasonably may hope to be, provided its departure from type were involuntary. But to cultivate one's distinctive qualities presupposes a fatuous estimate of those qualities.

Imitation is bad. It occasions hurt pride, causes ill-rewarded striving, confession of inadequacy, anxious effort. But it does not reflect an ideal as low, an attitude as self-loving, as is reflected by an effort to prove singular and superior.

The boaster of distinctive qualities becomes an actor, unpaid, unrespected, hardly tolerated, strutting as if the play were immensely entertaining and the lion of the piece the king of men.

Fortunately, the Kentuckian who is boastful of singular and picturesque qualities which he attributes to his State

and its people is rarer than he was formerly. The professional Southerner is a figure somewhat diminished as to numbers by time, undiminishable in dignity because without dignity at any time.

The New Englander who is serenely confident of his section's possession of a monopoly of American culture, and the New Yorker who would have everyone know that to be in America, outside of New York, is to be camping out in the wilds — are types too well assured to be dealt with by persuasion or hurt by ridicule.

The Middle Westerner, not content to be the typical American he is, and trying to prove himself a member of a separate race, might be stung by the readiness of the New Englander and the New Yorker to agree with his contention, without regarding the separate race as altogether admirable.

THIS IS A COLD WORLD

Boston Herald

THERE is no more lonely person than the sufferer from a cold. Even Job had a pal or two ready to listen to his woes, but the poor modern snuffler is without friends, an outcast, an object of suspicion. If he takes the Eighteenth Amendment on the blind side, it should be remembered that there is a household tradition that advises the use of quinine. And quinine alone is like law without order or strawberries without cream.

Devotees of hay fever find their path made smooth. They may move to those delightful colonies where the flowers of friendship bloom without pollen. If they sneeze a bit now and then, they no more than establish a right to special consideration. They may do so as properly and politely as did their ancestors over their embossed snuff-boxes. They find a comradely atmosphere for the exchange of symptoms and, with minds relieved, may turn their attention to other interests.

For a person addicted to the common cold there is no pleasant companionship. Although normally the least self-conscious person in the world, he becomes at once introspective. He is thrown in upon himself. He may have a decidedly interesting pain in the small of his back, but who will listen to his description of it? "Yes, yes," they tell him, "a cold, a cold. Too bad." As if there were no more to be said on a subject on which he could expatiate for hours!

For him there is no communion except with a chance-met fellow-sufferer and then he merely bribes his auditor by his willingness to hear the other's catalogue of ills. Neither

is really interested. This is no adequate outlet. At home he is a nuisance, at work as popular as Typhoid Mary. What wonder if he takes more quinine than he should?

There are associations for everything. Why should there not be one for the establishment of pleasant sanatoria — Chautauquas where the waving of a handkerchief will be respectable and not like the flaunting of a red flag? Here would be an interchange of gossip, adequate interests, and an opportunity to get well decently. Then there would be less need for a recourse to quinine, especially now when its twin medicament is so hard to obtain.

HOW I TRAINED MYSELF TO BE DISAGREEABLE

T. L. M. IN *Life* (NEW YORK)

My name is John Zenas Puddington. I inherited a cheerful disposition from my mother, and as I grew up I fell into the habit of being pleasant to everybody. Without realizing what I was doing, I made a host of friends. Everybody liked me. Rapidly growing worse as time went on, when I had reached maturity, my whole life was wasted in exchanging minor civilities.

It was at this critical point in my career that my attention was suddenly called to your course on "How to Be Disagreeable." I resolutely put it aside. An intense struggle took place within me. I could not make up my mind to quit the luxurious path of kindness. Smiling had become second nature to me.

In a moment of desperation one day, however, I determined to try the experiment. I sent for your prospectus. From that moment I became a changed man. In six weeks' study, by applying myself only an hour a day, I had become so disagreeable that all my former friends relieved me of their presence. What this has meant to me I cannot find words to express. I am no longer obliged to listen to humorous stories. Nobody asks me to dinner parties. Nobody cultivates me any more. The saving in time and strength is incalculable. I began at once to make a fortune, and now am free to be as disagreeable as I like.

I now realize that before I began taking your course, I was secretly haunted by the consciousness of how much

pain I would cause among all those to whom I had been kind, when I left them. This feeling has given way to one of the most fervent satisfaction. For now I know that everybody hates me, and my departure will be the signal for universal joy. This alone is worth the small price charged for your course.

PAST AND PRESENT

THE FAITH OF A HUMANIST

GEORGE SARTON

A FEW weeks ago, I had gone up from Florence to Fiesole. It was not a beautiful day. The weather was cold and dull, and I found myself in a melancholy and hesitating mood. Any man engaged in a long and arduous undertaking can but ask himself now and then, "Is it worth while?"

That is what I could not help asking myself on that gray afternoon: Was it really worth while? Was I on the right way? Why interrogate the past? Why not let bygones be bygones? There was so much to do to go forward, or simply to exist — so many practical problems the solution of which called for immediate action. Instead of taking infinite pains to unravel an irrevocable past, was it not wiser to raise crops and live stock, to bake bread, to build roads, to minister to the poor and suffering? Was I not like an idle man in a very busy world? In each of those homes yonder, on the hills and in the valley, there lived people who took up one urgent task after the other; they had hardly time to think or to dream; they were swept away by the needs of life.

Then I looked around me, and for a while I forgot my own perplexity. I had at last reached the top of the sacred hill. Remains of ancient walls reminded one of the old Etruscan culture. Near-by other ruins spoke of Roman power and refinement. Thus had civilization steadily grown for more than a thousand years before being brutally interrupted by the southward migrations of younger peoples. Soon after, however, fresh endeavors had been made; a new spiritual life had begun, and finally mediæval ideals had been adequately accomplished in this Franciscan

monastery, a magnificent assertion of virtue and charity against triumphant barbarity. And lo, yonder, in the valley — Florence! Millions of little voices reached my ears. Every stone of Florence told a story. The whole Italian Renaissance was parading before me. Here in Fiesole, and there in Florence, twenty-five centuries of almost uninterrupted civilization had accumulated reminiscences and glories. During this long period men had labored, suffered, tried in many ways to draw a little nearer to the truth, to understand the wonderful world in which they were living, to add here and there a little touch of beauty. They had lived and passed away — one hundred and fifty generations of them or more — and nothing remained of them, not even their bones, nothing but the monuments of beauty and virtue, nothing but the amount of truth, of beauty, of justice which they had conquered — pure gold, eternal joy extracted from the chaos. The rest was dead for ever.

Power and wealth had vanished. There remained only the things immaterial — ideals, or the monuments embodying them. These ideals were still alive to-day. Man was still groping after them, and nothing could be to him more interesting and pathetic than the story of his ancient struggles around them, were they victories or defeats. Was it not worth while to study this heroic struggle of man with nature and with himself, to observe the vicissitudes of his progress, to enumerate his conquests, each of which was in fact a new title of nobility?

On this sacred soil of Fiesole, deeply conscious of the smallness of my means and of the difficulties to be overcome, I dedicated myself anew to this task. To ease my mind, I tried to express my faith in plain words, and I thereupon drafted the following lines. I publish them after having made a few corrections, because they may be a help to readers who undergo similar anxieties.

To express my faith, I have to say many things which are commonplace. I do not try in the least to be original, but to state as simply as possible things which I deem important. I wish they were even more commonplace than they are.

I believe that the supreme end of life, as far as we can see it, is to produce immaterial things, such as truth, beauty, justice. For our practical purposes, it is not necessary to know whether these things exist in the absolute. Whether there be a superior limit or not, and whether this limit can be ultimately reached or not, I believe that we must fight our way upward toward these ideals. I can find no other meaning to my life, no other spring to my activity.

It is irritating to meet classical scholars and men of letters who seem to think that they are the guardians of culture, ancient and modern, and yet who do not see, nor try to see, the whole world of beauty which science is steadily unfolding under their very eyes. Gigantic thoughts are developing in their presence, but they calmly ignore them as if they were not men of their own day.

It is none the less irritating to meet scientists and inventors who do not seem to be aware of all the treasures of beauty and knowledge which man has slowly accumulated in the last five or six milleniums, who do not appreciate the charm and the nobility of the past, and who regard artists and historians alike as useless dreamers.

Gilbert Murray recently remarked [1] that "there are in life two elements, one transitory and progressive, the other comparatively — if not absolutely — nonprogressive and eternal, and that the soul is chiefly concerned with the second." The conceited men of letters, the so-called humanists, would fain claim that their function is a higher and more important one, since the object of their studies

[1] In his *Religio Grammatici*, London, 1918.

is properly this eternal element of life, while scientists are only concerned with progressive and evanescent matters. But a further remark of Gilbert Murray's shows that he at least knows better: "One might say roughly that material things are superseded but spiritual things, not; or that every thing considered as an achievement can be superseded, but considered as so much life, not."

It is true that most men of letters and — I am sorry to add — not a few scientists know science only by its material achievements, and ignore its spirit, seeing neither its internal beauty nor the beauty it extracts continually from the bosom of Nature. Now, I would say that, to find in the works of science of the past that which is not and cannot be superseded, is perhaps the most important part of our own quest. A true humanist must know the life of science as he knows the life of art and the life of religion.

We can but live in the present, and I believe that we must be fully, unreservedly, men of our own day. But to understand the present and make it a little our own, we must look both toward the past and toward the future. It is our duty to take advantage of every available source of information, to set in full light every action which was really great and noble, and yet to look toward the future for greater and nobler things. Briefly, a humanist's duty is not simply to study the past in a passive and sheepish way and to lose himself in his admiration; he must needs contemplate it from the summit of modern science, with the whole of human experience at his disposal and with a heart full of hope.

And for my brother scientists, I would add that our life must be useful indeed, but also beautiful, and that we need all the nobility of the past as well as the expert knowledge of to-day, to go forward. Our knowledge itself must be humane and generous, a thing of beauty, or it is not worth having.

Of what use can it be to us men to build daring bridges, airships, skyscrapers, if we lose thereby the art of joy and humble life? What is the use of comfort, of material cleanliness and accuracy, of hygiene, if we are to die of weariness and monotony? A grain of genuine style is worth ten thousand pounds of comfort.

But there is even more to be said. It is worth while to interrogate the past as fully as we can, because the race is more important than the individual.

If the individual were more important, our yesterdays would be like corpses and the past would really be a thing of the past. It would be better then, after having taken out of it every practical thing that it contained, to throw it away on the rubbish heap.

But I believe — nay, I know — that the individual is only a fragment of the race; that it is the race that counts. The tree is the real thing, and not its transitory leaves. Each of us is but a leaf from the human tree. Or better still, the whole of humanity, past, present, and future, is but one man. Origen had put it tersely some seventeen hundred years ago: *Universus mundus velut animal quoddam immensum.*

I believe that I am only a fragment of humanity, yet that I must try to look at things from the point of view of the whole, and not of the fragment. Hence there is no past, there is no future — simply an everlasting present. We all live in the present, but the present of the uneducated is narrow and mean, while that of a true humanist is catholic and generous. If the past were not part of your present, if it were not a living past, it would be better for you to leave it alone.

What little we know, what little power we possess, we owe to the accumulated endeavors of our ancestors. Mere gratefulness would already oblige us to study the history of these endeavors, our most precious heirlooms. But we

are not to remain idle spectators. It is not enough to appreciate and admire what our ancestors did; we must take up their best traditions, and that implies expert knowledge and craftsmanship, science and practice.

Hence, if we are anxious to do our best and to bear our full share of the common burden, we must be historians, scientists, craftsmen; and we shall be true humanists only to the extent of our success in combining the historic and the scientific spirit.

This is a considerable task and we may not succeed in accomplishing it, but it certainly is worth while trying. Some of us at least must needs do it, and they should dedicate themselves to it in the same spirit that mediæval craftsmen dedicated themselves, body and soul, to their art.

ATHENS, FLORENCE, OUR WORLD

Minneapolis Journal

THERE are two shining glories in human history, Athens and Florence. Their respective titles, the one, "The City of the Violet Crown," the other, "The City of the Lily," figure their beauty. To explain them may be impossible, but to admire them is salutary. Both illustrate the possibilities of the human spirit; and both are tragedies.

Lorenzo di Medici, called the Magnificent, died in the last decade of the fifteenth century, and with him died the Golden Age of the Italian Renaissance. At Athens, centuries before, had died Pericles, the largest-minded man that ever ruled a state. True, after Athens' fall there came Plato and Aristotle, as after Lorenzo's death there lived half-way through the sixteenth century the two Florentines, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti. Sunsets look more splendid than high noons.

But the Athens of Pericles and the Florence of Lorenzo were done. Their magnificent flowering was succeeded in either case by withering stalks. Literally there was nipped in the bud the fairest promise that human history supplies. Athens and Florence opened such chances as may never occur again. Unique and magnificent as are the actual achievements of both, what each seemed to presage surpassed what had been performed. Why was the failure? Why could not the promissory note each had drawn on the future be allowed to mature, to be redeemed gloriously?

The moralists have chorused that the failure was moral, as if beauty and intellect were fatally vicious, and goodness must necessarily somehow be associated with ugliness and stupidity. Degeneration does not explain Athens' fall,

not the Florentine decadence. What does so is War. Brute violence killed in both cases the fairest flower of civilization.

Our modern world was come in the year 1914 to a surpassing pitch of welfare, from which it has been cast down into a ditch — by War. And those who fancy we are going soon and easily to scramble out of that ditch deceive themselves with foolish optimism. There will not be such diffused welfare as prevailed before August, 1914, for many a decade to come. Such welfare indeed may never return, not even here in America.

War is civilization's foe, mankind's devouring enemy. It is the malign Fate that has killed the fairest promise throughout history. It has repeated in our day its fell work by the instrumentality of Germany, has put back civilization an hundred years, has wrecked human happiness for a generation.

CH'ANG-AN

HENRY W. BUNN

If we might recover some one charming parcel of the for-most-part dreadful past, which would we choose? Others doubtless would speak for the Athens of Phidias; or for the Florence of Dante or that of Leonardo and Politian; others still for some little court of Provençal troubadours; or, maybe, for Bagdad when Bagdad laughed and sang; or for Nuremberg or Wenden in their golden days; and yet other some for this or for that phase of human culture, beautiful but brief. Our voice would be given at once for the Ch'ang-an of the glorious reign of the Emperor Hsüan Tsung (eighth century), whose court was graced by the most extraordinary group of wits and geniuses ever gathered together, including that Chinese Anacreon, Li Po; that Celestial Villon, Tu Fu; and that prince of landscape painters, Wang Wei. Could our wish be realized, each afternoon we would join the poets, the painters, the wits, and the ladies (some so beautiful, 't is recorded, that they needed no rouge) in the "Pear Garden" of the dramatic college, to observe and criticize the budding actors; and each evening we would be fain of an invitation to share in the festivities of the Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup.

There is still a Ch'ang-an, better known as Si-gan Fu, incomparably situated in Shen-si on ground rising from the romantic Wei, foursquare with massive walls and noble gates, gazing southward on the White Mountain and the Tsing-ling-shan: a populous mart for teas and silks. But that is not our Ch'ang-an — the real Ch'ang-an. Just as Salem must be seen by the magic light of Hawthorne,

Florida from offshore by the light o' the moon, the Acroceraunian Mountains in the glow of sunrise, Colonus as glorified by Sophocles, Yarrow under the guidance of Wordsworth, — must thus be seen to be seen aright, to be seen as they really are, — so Ch'ang-an, that Capital of Song, must be seen as flashed upon the inner eye by the genius of Sung Tzü-hou, of the Emperor Ch'ien Wen-ti, of Li Po, of Tu Fu, of Po Chü-i, of Wang Wei — to be seen aright, to be seen as it really is.

Our attitude toward the Italy of to-day is immeasurably influenced by our inner vision of the Florence of Leonardo and Politian. Our attitude toward China is not influenced by any inner vision of Ch'ang-an. It should be.

A MOUNTAIN IN THESSALY

HARRY W. FRANTZ

In the ripe wisdom of the eighth grade, I sneered at the Greek pantheon, and thereby incurred the displeasure of my teacher. It was clear to me then that the gods did not exist, and I did not understand how anyone could believe otherwise. Perhaps some of the gods may have heard of my scorn of them and plotted against me, for fifteen years later I found myself living in full view of Mount Olympus.

My home in Saloniki was near the water front, on the Bay of Saloniki, and from my chamber window I looked across the waters to the mountain where lived the gods. I saw it at dawn, and I saw it, rose-mantled, in the sunset, and sometimes I saw its great ghost in the moonlight. As I lived through those muddy, malarial months in Saloniki, I understood readily enough why the gods had chosen to live on the healthy heights above the waters. The climate of the low-lying city would have killed them off before they ever arrived at maturity.

Every evening we used to go to the café of the *Cercle Militaire Française*. There, soothed by a nectar known as "mavrodaphne," we whiled away the sunset hour, and often contemplated events on Olympus. The mountain was a part of every picture, and could not be ignored.

For more than a year I had opportunity to observe the ways in which the gods participated in the affairs of men, and I would never again deny their existence. At first I thought them very inefficient, and sometimes it seemed that they sought to amuse themselves at the expense of the humans in the city, for they caused men to come hither

from all corners of the earth, making a babel and confusion such as the world had never known before.

The men in uniform everywhere were proof enough to me that Ares, the god of war, was still on duty. The great transports in the bay and the aeroplanes flying out Kalamara way were evidence, too, that Hermes, the god of commerce and invention, was taking an active interest in affairs. When the enemy planes dropped bombs, or munition dumps were fired at night, I thought of Hephæstus, the deformed god of fire and forger of thunderbolts; and sometimes, when British warships appeared in the bay, it seemed that Poseidon, the ruler of the sea, had appointed a proxy in the person of Britannia.

But perhaps Apollo was the busiest of the gods, for there was never a day without its flood of rumors, proving that the prophetic one was ever near. It is written of Apollo that he took delight in the founding of new cities. The truth of this was strikingly proved while I was in Macedonia, for great cities of tents and shacks — some for soldiers, others for refugees — sprang up like mushrooms from the Ægean to the Adriatic.

I used to feel sorry for Athena, patroness of the domestic arts, especially after the great fire that nearly destroyed Saloniki. Foodstuffs were always scarce and there was almost no fuel for cooking. The poor were mostly at work on the roads or in military shops and had no time to care for their homes. Many of them, poverty-stricken by the war, had sold what things of beauty they may have possessed. The once beautiful homes in the *Quartier Turque* had fallen into a sad state of unpainted shabbiness, and almost every house in the city had its share of insects. Hestia, too, must have been desolated to see every home converted into billets for soldiers of a dozen nationalities, and to know that hearths went cold for lack of charcoal.

Most of the other gods and goddesses revealed themselves in one way or another as the war went on. Almost every day we heard gossip of Eros and Dionysus, and there was always plenty of news about the doings of the three Fates. Thanks to the proximity of the gods and their faithful agents, events moved with great rapidity at Saloniki — men got drunk quickly, fell in love easily; and when at last Ares got tired of his sport, he brought the Balkan war to an end with incredible speed.

In the light of all this, my faith in the gods became profound, and I sought eagerly to know more about them. Several times my journeys took me near to Olympus, but I never found time to climb to its summit. My friends in the British Air Force often enjoyed a spin across the sea and above the great mountain, so I asked them to take note of what they saw up there. But none ever reported any sign of the gods. This, however, is not a matter of surprise, since it is hardly likely that the gods would have chosen to render themselves visible in the presence of the strange machines. Nor were they willing to show themselves to a camera; for one of my friends made the experiment with a moving-picture camera, and his pictures showed only a bare mountain-top.

Remembering that the gods often revealed their will and intentions through the Oracle at Delphi, I once made a trip to that famous spot. I walked there one evening, from the town of Itea on the Gulf of Corinth. In the morning I visited the Temple of Apollo, situated high up one side of a deep cañon. My guide seemed to have no great influence with the gods, and there was no revelation on the day of my visit. As my guide spoke no English except "Very fine" and "400 B.C.," and as I did not speak Greek, it was not possible for me to learn more of the intentions of the gods than the guidebook had taught me. I suspect, too, that the oracles may have been hushed by the presence of

several noisy automobiles which had brought a number of French officers from the port by the Gulf.

It was in the summer of 1918 that I gained my deepest insight into the ways of the gods and goddesses of high Olympus. Through my scepticism regarding the Eleusinian mysteries I had lost the protecting influence of Demeter, with the result that I found myself in a hospital at Kalamara. It was a peaceful place, situated on a bluff well above the bay, and looking direct toward Olympus. Most of my waking hours I spent in an easy-chair under a canvas roof, gazing at the Greek *cayiques* beating against the wind, or on the great convoys bound seaward at sundown. In the background of the picture was always the mountain.

One of my eyes was under a patch, and I dared not read, so there was little to do save contemplate the pantheon. In the golden haze of the Greek evening it was pleasant to imagine the gods leaving their work for the day and going off to enjoy a cut of venison and a bottle of nectar, just as the officers of the Allies were wont to do. The doings of the gods seemed quite as real as the rest of life. I wondered, too, as I sat there, whether the gods were ever afflicted with ennui, or as the English say "fed up," after the long vigil of the war; if they were, I suspected that they would be ready soon to put an end to it all.

I asked the gods for many things in those days, and sometimes I even dared to dream of the Elysian Fields.

I was barely out of the hospital when the great Balkan offensive began, and there followed months of miracles for me, the greatest of all being this: that life was continuously and extraordinarily interesting. So it is that I believe in the gods and goddesses. But since they never rendered themselves visible to me, I can only picture in my mind the mountain where they dwell — Olympus, snow-capped monument to the faith and dreams of men, rising boldly in cerulean skies.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

The Times (London)

Mr. Roosevelt once divided success into two kinds: the rare kind which comes to the man who can do what no one else can do, to the genius, and the commoner kind, which comes to the man who has developed ordinary qualities further than most men. This distinction would be difficult to draw in practice. There can be no doubt that the genius of Mozart included special powers, which in the ordinary man are not only undeveloped, but even nonexistent. But Napoleon also was a genius; and we cannot say that any of his powers do not exist in the ordinary man. His genius, and even his almost magical influence over men, were only the result of an extraordinary combination and development of ordinary powers. We cannot say that he had a special faculty such as we find in great artists; and, indeed, Emerson, in his studies of Representative Men, took Napoleon as the man of the world, seeming therefore to insist upon the fact that his genius consisted only of ordinary qualities very highly developed. Again, men are often born with a very wonderful special faculty, whether for musical composition or chess-playing or mathematics, whom no one would call men of genius. The technical gift of Mozart is not very uncommon; but we do not call it genius unless it is combined with the less specialized and less easily defined power of using it to express something of moment. Such gifts are mere tools, whose value depends upon the manner in which they are used, although the man who does not possess them must be continually hampered by the lack of them.

But Mr. Roosevelt, who was addressing an audience

mainly consisting of ordinary men, was inclined to insist upon the fact that success in most things can be obtained without these extraordinary gifts. He took the line of Reynolds, who, in addressing the students of the Academy, almost contended that there was no such thing as genius, even in painting, and that a man of ordinary gifts could reach the highest excellence in it by a right and assiduous use of his powers.

Here we are not far from the idea that genius consists in taking pains. But, when we say that the right kind of pains must always be taken, we leave genius a good deal of its mystery. For one of the main difficulties in every activity, whether art or statesmanship or science or business, is to take the right kind of pains: to attempt what is best suited to the powers of the individual and also to the object he has in view. There is a kind of sagacity needed for this which we cannot analyze, and for the lack of which the most splendid natural gifts are often wasted. Thus, when Mr. Roosevelt tells us that for great success all we need is the extraordinary development of ordinary qualities, he still leaves us in the dark about that power which some men possess of developing ordinary qualities into an extraordinary efficiency for a particular purpose. There is the secret of success, which he has not analyzed, and which we do not explain when we call it will, or energy, or character, or common sense. It is not merely will, or energy, because there is in it a power of direction which these words do not imply. Character is a word too vague, and used in too many different senses, to explain anything; and as for common sense, the very fact that it is common prevents it from being the cause of uncommon success.

In men who succeed greatly — whether we call them men of genius or not — there is often an urgency of desire not to be found in the great mass of mankind. They seem to know very clearly what they want to do, and from the

first employ all their powers in doing it. By a kind of instinct they plan their lives so that no effort of theirs is wasted, and so that all their experience and actions have a cumulative power; and this is the case whether their success is material or spiritual or scientific or artistic. When we read the lives of great men we cannot but be struck by the manner in which all kinds of experiences that might in themselves seem to be random, or even disastrous, are utilized in the long run.

There are saints who would never have attained to such a height and subtlety of virtue if they had not been sinners in their youth. There are artists who, through early hackwork, obtain a peculiar pliancy and swiftness of accomplishment. There are statesmen who seem to learn all that they need to know about men in a quiet country life. Such were Saint Augustine, Shakespeare, and Cromwell — all as different from each other as any men could be, yet having in common the mysterious and most valuable power of profiting by every kind of experience. Cromwell, indeed, seems to have become a statesman and general only because the emergency called for him. But for the Civil War he might have been a country gentleman all his life. And yet he must have been learning from the first, and from all his quite ordinary experiences, lessons such as most men never learn at all. In fact, he must have had that mental power of digestion which is the main secret of success even in those activities which also need very special gifts — the power which made Rembrandt a greater painter than Van Dyck, Beethoven a greater composer than Mendelssohn, Shakespeare a greater poet than Fletcher; which, wherever it is used, always sets the master far above the mere brilliant specialist.

TELEPHONE

JOSEPH HUSBAND

THERE was a continuous sound of many voices; a steady cadence in which no individual note dominated; a hundred women's voices incessantly repeating brief sentences with a rising inflection at the end, each sentence lost in the continuous tumult of sound. In a long line, perched on high stools, they sat before the black panels which rose behind their narrow desks. Into the transmitters — hung from their necks — they articulated their strange confused chorus. And apparently without relation to the words they uttered, a hundred pairs of hands reached back and forth across the panels, weaving interminably a never-to-be-completed pattern on its finely checkered face.

On the panels a thousand little lights blinked white and disappeared. Tiny sparks of ruby and green flashed and were gone. Untiring, the white stars flickered in and out, and behind them raced the tireless hands, weaving a strange pattern with long green cords. And unbroken, unintelligible, the murmur of the girls' voices vibrated unceasingly.

Outside, under the gray sky of a rainy day, the life of the city was at the flood. Over slim wires, buried in conduits below the trampled street, or high strung, swinging in the rising wind, the voices of a thousand people told their thousand messages to waiting ears. A passing thought, perhaps, that you would have me hear: with a single movement you lift the transmitter from the hook beside you; white flashes the tiny lamp on the black panel; a girl's hand sweeps across the board and plugs the connection. Space, useless, is swept aside; though actual miles may intervene, I am suddenly beside you.

Messages of business that can make or ruin, death, love, infidelity, appeal! Automatically, surely, she weaves back and forth across the panels. Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos — Parcæ of the switchboard!

Here is the throbbing pulse of the city bared and visible. Night is over; with rapidly increasing frequency the flashing drops of light indicate that the activity of day has begun. Every action must be expressed in words, and, bared and concentrated, that word-current of the city rises like a gathering wave. From ten in the morning to five minutes after ten, the tide is at the flood. The flicker of lights is dazzling; the girls' hands race dizzily behind their flashing summons. Business is at its height. But on another row of panels the occasional flash of lights offers a curious contrast: this is a panel for a part of the residence district; from seven to eight in the evening its lights will glow with activity. Then business is over and the down-town panels will be darkened. Here is a visual shifting of scene and interest. Work is over, the social engagements are made, and business is forgotten. There is a friendly gossiping along the wires.

Night has come, and a dozen girls watch the long deserted boards. Like the occasional glimmer of a cab-lamp late upon the street, the signals, one by one, flash and are gone. The world is fast asleep. Far down at the end of the panel a signal brightens. "Number, please?" "Police!" It was a woman's voice. From the card index "Central" picks out the street address which corresponds to the number, and the nearest station is advised to call. Had the woman no time to finish her message? There is another light burning on the panel. Already she is forgotten and the slim hands are making another connection. Police or doctor — the night calls are laden with portent.

What interests the world to-day? Does something disturb the minds of men? The flashing panels answer. As

surely as the sun will rise to-morrow will the increased throb of light betray the fevered interest of mankind. Five o'clock! Usually there is a slacking up — not to-day. Heavier than at the busiest five minutes in the whole twenty-four hours, come the calls for connections. Did the White Sox win their game? It is the final of the series. Who was elected? Politics to-day runs high. War? The troops are off; marines have landed! Strikes, fires, or the sinking ship: the racing hands weave faster; the steady hum of the girls' voices accelerates almost imperceptibly. Here beats the pulse upon the surface; they know its normal rise and fall; by its fevered beat they can read diversion or disaster.

Back over the years the superintendent recalled the various events which had been dramatically visualized on the switchboard panels. Twelve years ago — about; the panels were fewer then. It was almost five o'clock in the afternoon; in a quarter of an hour the day operators would be leaving, tired from their long labor at the board. The lights were flashing slowly, perfectly recording the slackened beat of business. Five minutes to five — a wave of white light seemed to flare across the downtown panels, suddenly, unexpectedly. Ignorant of the cause, the girls plugged in the desired connections. Every one seemed to be calling out to the residence sections. For a brief minute there was a pause — the flood of light was gone as abruptly as it had come. Then like a flame across the residence panels gleamed the signals, calling back, a hundredfold, back to the stores and offices.

The men had heard first the terrible rumor. Their messages across the wires to their homes had sought the answer to their first thought that she — that they — were safe. And then back, in anguished women's voices, came frantic appeals for names of the missing. For long hours through the night the white-faced girls held to their posts; and in

their tired eyes the signals burned feverishly. That night Chicago shuddered in its grief, for in the flames of the Iroquois Theatre, at a holiday matinée, had gone out the lives of countless women, men, and little children.

A NOCTURNE OF STEEL

E. N. SIMONS

STEEL! The word suggests strength and endurance. It pervades the world about us. Skeleton combinations of girders, shimmering wheels and rods of machinery, keen polished instruments, miles and miles of gleaming rail-track, the firm outlines of ships, and the dull sheen of guns and ammunition, all bear silent witness to its influence.

The manufacture of steel invokes varied scenes — picturesque blendings of light and shade, through which the figures of sturdy men come and go. Perhaps a Dante alone could describe the sombre interplay of fire, and flame, and the feverish, unceasing effort of a modern steelworks.

The foundry, in which steel castings are moulded from liquid metal, has more than a touch of the infernal. Here, in a great building with sanded floors, are gathered stacks of wooden "patterns," presently to be embedded in the sand which takes their shape. The faint reek of drying moulds reaches one from the stoves. Here and there derrick-cranes stand like giant gallows, or pivot round with a groan and a rattle. Elsewhere flare the converters, huge iron vessels filled with molten steel, through which there passes a fierce current of air, driving out impurities in a shower of golden sparks. The beat and drone of the blowing engine make tremendous, but not unpleasant, music for the scene.

It is a scene of complex activities. The flame-spouting vessels seethe and throb internally. The whole floor is littered with iron moulding-frames into which short-sleeved men ram sand vigorously. Others kneel to trim and smooth the edges of their moulds, like children playing on a beach.

The air vibrates with the grinding of cranes, the steady *pant-pant-pant* of the converters, the dull thud of rammers on sand, the shouts of busy foremen. In the bright glare of the vessels distant corners become gloomy fastnesses to which the bandit shadows fly for safety.

At length one of the converters ceases to throb. At a given signal hidden machinery tilts it by degrees from the vertical to the horizontal. A vast iron bucket is swung up by a crane, and the converter pours into it a brilliant stream of fluid metal. Laborers, their eyes protected from the glare by blue goggles, push back with iron rods the glowing crust of slag which has formed inside the vessel and threatens to slip into the bucket.

Presently the bucket is full, and hauled away toward a set of moulds which stand waiting to be used. It swings from mould to mould, tilting slowly, pouring steel into each. At length there comes a series of sharp commands. The men stand back. The lip of the bucket dips, and a great splash of molten slag falls to the floor, causing a fierce shower of red-hot sparks to fly. This is waste — impure stuff from the bottom of the bucket. Sand is shoveled onto it immediately. It crackles and splutters, and glows with a dull red wickedness.

The spectacle is beautiful. Beauty in the tongues of flame and steady showers of sparks that issue from the mouths of the converters. Beauty in the grayish eddies of smoke that whirl up the chimney-shafts, and in the vertical thread of molten slag that falls from the cupola above the vessels. Beauty in the occasional hiss of the white-hot sediment thrown out by the empty vessels and quenched by wet sand. Beauty in the rose-tinted pillars of steam that leap up from these slag-pits, and in the gloom and mystery that lurk among the rafters. Beauty — even from the dazzling glare of liquid metal — calls, and calls, and calls unceasingly.

From the foundry one passes into the machine shop, where the castings are turned in lathes, drilled by great machines, clipped and shaped and trimmed to fit them for their work. Here, in this shop, is to be seen none of the white splendor of molten steel, the eternal conflict of flame and shadow. In place of these there is an incomparable riot of sound. Overhead traveling cranes whirr, and glide to and fro with fussy purpose. Lathes click and rumble. Blue-clad men flit hither and thither, dwarfed by the monstrous shapes of the machines they serve. Strange, quivering shadows appear on the walls. And overriding everything, grim, insistent, unescapable, is an impression of restrained power.

The gangways are strewn with castings waiting to be machined. Wheels, steel gearing, unrecognizable things with queer projections and excessive angularity, are heaped up in metallic profusion. Shafting-belts whirl monotonously. The tools which cut into the steel fling off delicate spirals of metal, and leave bright, clean surfaces in their wake. Everything has a cold beauty, passionless, but in its way sublime.

The supreme fascination is, however, the incessant energy of it all. All day long, and sometimes well into the night, these activities go on. Wheels revolve, machines whirl and spin, cranes waft enormous masses of steel from one end of the building to the other, men shout, and gesticulate, and bend mechanical giants to their will.

But despite all this, despite this feverish energy, the machines retain dignity, a majestic aloofness. They work — condescendingly.

At the crucible furnace, on the other hand, it is the men themselves who capture the eye. In this, the oldest and best-loved of steel-making processes, the materials are melted in special clay pots, each of which holds about eighty pounds. They are lifted bodily from the furnace

by means of tongs, and the metal is turned into the ingot-mould, whence it takes its ultimate shape. All this work is done by sheer muscular power. A white blaze of light beats upon the worker's face as he stands over the furnace with the glowing crucible in his tongs. Above and around and beyond him is shadow. Smoked glasses preserve his eyes from injury. His teeth close upon a rag to keep the fumes from his throat. Great asbestos flaps protect his boots from the scorching heat. And then, with a series of quick movements, each timed to perfection, the pot is lifted from the flames, carried to the mould, and emptied. Eager rods feel for it and trundle it away.

Crucible after crucible is dealt with in this fashion. Perspiration stands out in coalescing beads on the faces of the workers. They are not separate personalities, but blind, fanatical devotees of the great god Industry, the monster of red flame and black smoke who cries incessantly, "Produce! Produce!"

Even the warehouses have their charm. Bars and bars and bars of steel, for chisels, punches, tools of all kinds, are stacked upright against the walls. Varying in length from ten to twelve feet, they seem to lounge, like thin giants awaiting an opportune moment for departure. In this corner and in that are to be seen men swinging hammers and branding the bars with the essential mark and quality. Others work methodically at benches, pasting colored labels on the steel. Others, again, pack great cases, or twist red-hot iron bands round a number of bars. Hydraulic cranes load the cases and bundles on to drays; the horses stand waiting patiently.

Everything in these busy sheds is transitory, unsettled. It is the point of exodus. These loads of steel, all destined for different parts of the world, leave behind them a vague feeling of adventurousness, as if a doorway of escape from the realities of life had been left ajar for a moment.

Apart from these repeatable impressions of industrial beauty, there are others, more fleeting, which come upon one suddenly: the crimson glow of slag cooling in the shadow of stacked ingots; the demoniac figures of men silhouetted against the glare of a furnace; the stream of sparks from an emery-wheel in contact with hard metal; the flakes of white-hot scale from an ingot in the mighty grip of the press; or, more human, a few squares of warm orange from the lighted windows of an office. Such impressions depend upon mood and moment.

But at night all the barbaric splendor of the works is intensified. The gaunt framework of the foundry struggles vainly to retain the flood of light which escapes from within. Every window, every chink, and cranny, and skylight, pours out runnels of red light. Chimneys, flaming, interrogative torches, thrust themselves into the sky. And from its platform the furnace sends forth a fierce red glare, an eternal challenge to the darkness.

Over to the east the railway signals exhibit pin-points of red and green, and the rails themselves glimmer faintly where the beam from the furnace strikes them.

In keeping with the splendid strife of light and darkness, the sounds of toil and industry slash and tear at the stillness of the night. The muffled roar of the furnace blends indescribably with the hiss and thud of steam-hammers, the rattle of cranes, the clang of hammered steel. Lower down, in the sidings, an engine pants heavily, and clashes and clatters among the trucks.

Frequently a goods-train rattles past the works, and from time to time an express sweeps by, a chain of linked-up lozenges of light. Somewhere in the distance can be heard the drone of a circular saw. And human voices cut across the dull murmur of the machines.

It is the Nocturne of Steel.

POLITICAL PRESTIDIGITATION

AMBROSE BIERCE

"WHAT we most need, to secure honest elections," says a well-meaning reformer, "is the Clifford or the Myers voting-machine." Why, truly, here is a hopeful spirit — a rare and radiant intelligence suffused with the conviction that men can be made honest by machinery, that human character is a matter of gearing, ratchets, and dials! One would give something to know how it feels to be like that. A mind so constituted must be as happy as a hen incubating a nestful of porcelain door-knobs. It lives in rapturous contemplation of a world of its own creation — a world where public morality and political good order are to be had by purchase at the machine shop. In that delectable world religion is superfluous; the true high priest is the mechanical engineer; the minor clergy are the village blacksmiths. It is rather a pity that so fine and fair a sphere should prosper only in the attenuated ether of an idiot's understanding.

Voting-machines are doubtless well enough; they save labor, and enable the statesmen of the street to know the result within a few minutes of the closing of the polls — whereby many are spared to their country who might otherwise incur fatal disorders by exposure to the night air while assisting in awaiting the returns. But a voting-machine that human ingenuity cannot pervert, human ingenuity cannot invent.

That is true, too, of laws. Your statesman of a mental stature somewhat overtopping that of the machine-person puts his faith in law. Providence has deigned to permit him to be persuaded of the efficacy of statutes — good,

stringent, carefully drawn statutes, definitively repealing all the laws of nature in conflict with any of their provisions. So the poor devil (I am writing of Mr. Legion) turns for relief from law to law, ever on the stool of repentance, yet ever unfouling the anchor of hope. By no power on earth can his indurated understanding be penetrated by the truth that his woeful state is due, not to any laws of his own, nor to any lack of them, but to his rascally refusal to obey the Golden Rule. How long is it since we were all clamoring for the Australian-ballot law, which was to make a new heaven and a new earth? We have the Australian-ballot law — and the same old earth smelling to the same old Heaven. Writhe upon the triangle as we may, groan out what new laws we will, the pitiless thing will fall upon our bleeding backs as long as we deserve it.

If our sins, which are scarlet, are to be washed white as wool, it must be in the tears of a genuine contrition: our crocodile deliverances will profit us nothing. We must stop chasing dollars, stop lying, stop cheating, stop ignoring art, literature, and all the refining agencies and instrumentalities of civilization. We must subdue our detestable habit of shaking hands with prosperous rascals and fawning upon the merely rich. It is not permitted to our employers to plead, in justification of low wages, the law of supply and demand that is giving them high profits. It is not permitted to discontented employees to break the bones of contented ones and destroy the foundations of social order. It is infamous to look upon public office with the lust of possession; it is disgraceful to solicit political preferment, to strive and compete for "honors" that are sullied and tarnished by the touch of the reaching hand. Until we amend our personal characters we shall amend our laws in vain. Though Paul plant and Apollos water, the field of reform will grow nothing but the figless thistle and the grapeless thorn. The State is an aggregation of individuals.

Its public character is the expression of their personal ones. By no political prestidigitation can it be made better and wiser than the sum of their goodness and wisdom. To expect that men who do not honorably and intelligently conduct their private affairs will honorably and intelligently conduct the affairs of the community is to be a fool. We are told that out of nothing God made the heavens and the earth; but out of nothing God never did, and man never can, make a public sense of honor and a public conscience.

PUBLIC OPINION

AMBROSE BIERCE

"PUBLIC OPINION," says Buckle, "being the voice of the average man, is the voice of mediocrity." Is it therefore so very wise and infallible a guide as to be accepted without other credentials than its name and fame? Ought we to follow its light and leading with no better assurance of the character of its authority than a count of noses of those following it already, and with no inquiry as to whether it has not on many former occasions led them and their several sets of predecessors into bogs of error and over precipices to "eternal mock"? Surely "the average man," as everyone knows him, is not very wise, not very learned, not very good; how is it that his views of so intricate and difficult matters as those of which public opinion makes pronouncement through him are entitled to such respect? It seems to me that the average man, as I know him, is very much a fool, and something of a rogue as well. He has only a smattering of education, knows virtually nothing of political history, nor history of any kind, is incapable of logical — that is to say, clear — thinking, is subject to the suasion of base and silly prejudices, and selfish beyond expression. That such a person's opinions should be so obviously better than my own that I should accept them instead, and assist in enacting them into laws, appears to me most improbable. I may "bow to the will of the people" as gracefully as a defeated candidate, and for the same reason, namely, that I can not help myself; but to admit that I was wrong in my belief and flatter the power that subdues me — no, that I will not do. And if nobody would do so, the average man would not be so cocksure of his

infallibility and might sometimes consent to be counseled by his betters.

In any matter of which the public has imperfect knowledge, public opinion is as likely to be erroneous as is the opinion of an individual equally uninformed. To hold otherwise is to hold that wisdom can be got by combining many ignorances. A man who knows nothing of algebra cannot be assisted in the solution of an algebraic problem by calling in a neighbor who knows no more than himself; and the solution approved by the unanimous vote of ten million such men would count for nothing against that of a competent mathematician. To be entirely consistent, gentlemen enamored of public opinion should insist that the textbooks of our common schools should be the creation of a mass meeting, and all disagreements arising in the course of the work settled by a majority vote. That is how all difficulties incident to the popular translation of the Hebrew Scriptures were composed. It should be admitted, however, that most of those voting knew a little Hebrew, though not much. A problem in mathematics is a very simple thing compared with many of those upon which the people are called to pronounce by resolution and ballot — for example, a question of finance. "The voice of the people is the voice of God" — the saying is so respectably old that it comes to us from the Latin. He is a strange, an unearthly politician who has not a score of times publicly and solemnly signified his faith in it. But does anyone really believe it? Let us see.

In the period between 1859 and 1885 the Democratic party was defeated six times in succession. The voice of the people pronounced it in error and unfit to govern. Yet after each overthrow it came back into the field, gravely reaffirming its faith in the principles that God had condemned. Then God twice reversed Himself, and the Republicans "never turned a hair," but set about beating

Him with as firm a confidence of success (justified by the event) as they had known in the years of their prosperity. Doubtless in every instance of a political party's defeat there were defections; but doubtless not all were due to the voice that spoke out of the great white light that fell about Saul of Tarsus. . . .

Majorities rule, when they do rule, not because they ought, but because they can. We vote in order to learn without fighting which party is the stronger; it is less disagreeable to learn it that way than the other way. Sometimes the party that is numerically the weaker is by possession of the Government actually the stronger, and could maintain itself in power by an appeal to arms, but the habit of submitting when outvoted is hard to break. Moreover, we all recognize, in a subconscious way, the reasonableness of the habit as a practical method of getting on; and there is always the confident hope of success in the next canvass. That one's cause will succeed because it ought to succeed is perhaps the most general and invincible folly affecting the human judgment. Observation cannot shake it, nor experience destroy. Though you bray a partisan in the mortar of adversity till he numbers the strokes of the pestle by the hairs of his head, yet will not this fool notion depart from him. He is always going to win the next time, however frequently and disastrously he has lost before. And he can always give you cogent reasons for the faith that is in him. His chief reliance is on the "fatal mistakes" made since the last election by the other party. There never was a year in which the party in power and the party out of power did not make bad mistakes — mistakes which, unlike eggs and fish, seem always worst when freshest. If idiotic errors of policy were always fatal, no party would ever win an election, and there would be a hope of better government under the benign sway of the domestic cow.

GOOD-BYE, AMERICA!

H. W. NEVINSON

In mist and driving snow the towers of New York fade from view. The great ship slides down the river. Already the dark, broad seas gloom before her. Good-bye, most beautiful of modern cities! Good-bye to glimmering spires and lighted bastions, dreamlike as the castles and cathedrals of a romantic vision! Good-bye to thin films of white steam that issue from central furnaces and flit in dissolving wreaths around those precipitous heights! Good-bye to heaven-piled offices, so clean, so warm, where lovely stenographers, with silk stockings and powdered faces, sit leisurely at work or converse in charming ease! Good-bye, New York! I am going home. I am going to an ancient city of mean and mouldering streets, of ignoble coverts for mankind, extended monotonously over many miles; of grimy smoke clinging closer than a blanket; of smudgy typists who know little of silk or powder, and less of leisure and charming ease. Good-bye, New York! I am going home.

Good-bye to beautiful "apartments" and "homes"! Good-bye to windows looking far over the city as from a mountain-peak! Good-bye to central heating and radiators, fit symbols of the hearts they warm! Good-bye to frequent and well-appointed bathrooms, glory of the plumber's art! Good-bye to suburban gardens running into each other without hedge or fence to separate friend from friend or enemy from enemy! Good-bye to shady verandas where rocking-chairs stand ranged in rows, ready for reading the voluminous Sunday papers and the *Saturday Evening Post!* Good-bye, America! I am going home.

I am going to a land where every man's house is his prison — a land of open fires and chilly rooms and frozen water-pipes, of washing stands and slop pails, and one bath per household at the most; a land of fences and hedges and walls, where people sit aloof and see no reason to make themselves seasick by rocking upon shore. Good-bye, America, I am going home.

Good-bye to the copious meals — early grapefruit, the "cereals," eggs broken in a glass! Good-bye to oysters, large and small, to celery and olives beside the soup, to "sea food," to sublimated viands, to bleeding duck, to the salad course, to the "individual pie" or the thick wedge of apple pie, to the invariable slab of ice cream, to the coffee, also bland with cream; to the home-brewed alcohol! I am going to the land of joints and roots and solid pudding; the land of ham and eggs and violent tea; the land where oysters are good for suicides alone, and where mustard grows and whiskey flows. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the long stream of motors — "limousines" or "flivvers"! Good-bye to the signal lights upon Fifth Avenue, gold, crimson, and green; the sudden halt when the green light shines, as though at the magic word an enchanted princess had fallen asleep; the hurried rush for the leisurely lunch at noon; the deliberate appearance of hustle and bustle in business; the Jews, innumerable as the Red Sea sand! Good-bye to outside staircases for escape from fire. Good-bye to scrappy suburbs littered with rubbish of old boards, empty cans, and boots! Good-bye to standardized villages and small towns, alike in litter, in ropes of electric wires along the streets, in clanking "trolleys," in chapels, stores, railway stations, Main Streets, and isolated houses flung at random over the country! Good-bye to miles of advertisement imploring me in ten-foot letters to eat somebody's codfish ("No Bones!"),

or smoke somebody's cigarettes ("They Satisfy!"), or sleep with innocence in the "Faultless Nightgown!" Good-bye to long trains where one smokes in a lavatory, and sleeps at night upon a shelf screened with heavy green curtains and heated with stifling air, while over your head or under your back the baby yells and the mother tosses moaning, until at last you reach your "stopping-off place," and a semi-negro sweeps you down with a little broom, as in a supreme rite of worship! Good-bye to the house that is labeled "One Hundred Years Old," for the amazement of mortality! Good-bye to thin woods and fields inclosed with casual pales, old hoops, and lengths of wire! I am going to the land of a policeman's finger, where the horse and the bicycle still drag out a lingering life; a land of old villages and towns as little like each other as one woman is like the next; a land where trains are short, and one seldom sleeps in them, for in any direction within a day they will reach a sea; a land of vast and ancient trees, of houses time-honored three centuries ago, of cathedrals that have been growing for a thousand years, and of village churches built while people believed in God. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the land of a new language in growth, of split infinitives and cross-bred words; the land where a dinner jacket is a "Tuxedo," a spittoon a "cuspidor"; where your opinion is called your "reaction," and where "vamp," instead of meaning an improvised accompaniment to song, means a dangerous female! Good-bye to the land where grotesque exaggeration is called humor, and people gape in bewilderment at irony, as a bullock gazes at a dog straying in his field! Good-bye to the land where strangers say "Glad to meet you, sir," and really seem glad; where children whine their little desires, and never grow much older; where men keep their trousers up with belts that run through loops, and women have to bathe in

stockings! I am going to a land of ancient speech where we still say "record" and "concord" for "recud" and "concud," where "necessarily" and "extraordinarily" must be taken at one rush — a hedge-ditch-and-rail in the hunting field; where we do not "commute" or "check" or "page," but "take a season" and "register" and "send a boy round"; where we never say we are glad to meet a stranger, and seldom are; where humor is understatement and irony is our habitual resource in danger or distress; where children are told they are meant to be seen and not heard; where it is "bad form" to express emotions, and suspenders are a strictly feminine article of attire. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the multitudinous papers, indefinite of opinion, crammed with insignificant news, and asking you to continue a first-page article on page 23, column 5! Good-bye to the weary platitude, accepted as wisdom's latest revelation! Good-bye to the docile audiences that lap rhetoric for substance! Good-bye to politicians contending for aims more practical than principles! Good-bye to Republicans and Democrats, distinguishable only by mutual hatred! Good-bye to the land where Liberals are thought dangerous and Radicals show red! Where Mr. Gompers is called a Socialist, and Mr. Asquith would seem advanced! A land too large for concentrated indignation; a land where wealth beyond the dreams of British profiteers dwells, dresses, gorges, and luxuriates, emulated and unashamed! I am going to a land of politics violently divergent; a land where even coalitions cannot coalesce; where meetings break up in a turbulent disorder, and no platitude avails to soothe the savage breast; a land fierce for personal freedom and indignant with rage for justice; a land where wealth is taxed out of sight, or for very shame strives to disguise its luxury; a land where an ancient order is passing away and leaders whom you call extreme are hailed

by Lord Chancellors as the very fortifications of security. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to prose chopped up to look like verse! Good-bye to the indiscriminate appetite which gulps lectures as opiates and "printed matter" as literature! Good-bye to the wizards and witches who ask to psychoanalyze my complexes, inhibitions, and silly dreams! Good-bye to the exuberant religious or fantastic beliefs by which unsatisfied mankind still strives desperately to penetrate beyond the flaming bulwarks of the world! Good-bye, Americans! I am going to a land very much like yours. I am going to your spiritual home.

MY "NEW-THOUGHT" BOYHOOD: AN AMERICAN ADVENTURE

CHARLES THOMAS HALLINAN

When the social historian comes to write the story of religion in America, I, for one, hope he will devote some pages to "New Thought," as a phenomenon peculiarly significant and American. It is because I feel this very strongly that I am tempted to outline, for the readers of the *Hibbert Journal*, the impressions made upon me by one of the numerous "sects" which swept the United States in the nineties of the last century.

In my story — at least so it seems to me — the social historian aforesaid will learn something of America not recorded in the history of Protestantism, at least in the more orthodox forms.

New Thought, as I now perceive, came into our little suburb on a flood tide of business and culture — what I am tempted to call "culturine." A big department-store, the first of its kind in the country, had sprung up in our raw, windy Western city, and the suburb threw out a rattling, hideous elevated railroad across the intervening territory to meet it. This brought us "within thirty minutes of the city," and yielded us up, before we knew it, to forces we had never met before. That department store unsettled all the ideas — economic, aesthetic, social, and, ultimately, religious — which the community had heretofore enjoyed.

Before that department store came into our existence we were linked uncomplainingly to the past. The furniture in our homes was old stuff, shipped from old homesteads to the new homes in the West. The new which we bought

was conservative, modeled for the most part on lines familiar for generations. But the department store changed everything.

Every day it brought in from Michigan, and sold, a whole trainload of machine-made furniture: gilt, spindle-legged chairs came in; onyx-topped tables; pretentious plush-covered "parlor sets" which wore bare in a season and had to be periodically recovered. It brought in cheap colored pictures, vastly alluring to a generation brought up on family portraits, steel engravings of The Stag at Eve, and worsted mottoes. It brought in pyrography, an epidemic of burnt-wood bookracks and of burnt-leather sofa-pillows. It taught us to buy and give one another the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám!*

All this did n't come in, I admit, without a bitter struggle. What we chiefly resented was the dilemma it presented to us; we wanted everything as cheap as we could get it, and we were disturbed at the wholesale character of the process of manufacture and distribution which gave us that cheapness. Was the thing "common"? That was the paralyzing question. We had two categories, as I recall it: a thing was either "nice" or it was "common," and the struggle to classify canned pictures, canned furniture, canned culture of all sorts, was the most unsettling single influence in our suburb when New Thought came in.

When New Thought came in, we had four Protestant churches in our suburb: the small and socially superior Protestant Episcopal church, which unscrupulously combed the other churches for choir-boys; the big humming Methodist church, whose sermons you could hear through the open windows clear out on the sidewalk a hundred feet away; the Baptist church, whose pulpit, to the common scandal, was sometimes filled by the Professor of Church History at the big Baptist university near by, whose theology was

reputed to be no better than it should be; and my own church, the Presbyterian. There we had in the pulpit, as I realize now, the first exponent in that part of the country of "muscular Christianity" — a youngish middle-aged man who declared impressively that there was nothing mollycoddle about Christianity, and who gave us boys boxing lessons in the big round primary-room, with lithographs of a meek Christ on the walls. The Unitarians had not invaded our neighborhood then, and the only Catholic church was many blocks away.

Of theological controversy or discomfort, there was practically none. I do not recall a single young person who had a moment's disturbance over any article of faith. Church lines were drawn strictly, perhaps a trifle jealously, but if the conversations on the front porches were any criteria, there was a universal relaxation in belief, an amiable desire to reduce creed and formulas to their simplest and least pretentious terms, to make shift somehow with a minimum of personal and collective discomfort. I remember only one flare-up, when our somewhat too progressive Presbyterian preacher invited the Catholic priest to occupy his pulpit one Sunday night; this was resented, but chiefly on the grounds that it was n't an equitable transaction, it being obviously impossible for Father Hissian to return the compliment. One of the vestrymen, who had formerly belonged to the A.P.A. and who still had a barrel or two of its pamphlets in his attic, resigned from the church in protest, but this action, as I remember it, brought a prompt revulsion of feeling in favor of the minister. There was such a thing as carrying your convictions too far!

But if in matters of theology there was a general deliquescence going on, I know now that there was considerable yearning and unrest. But it was fundamentally economic. There was scarcely a family which was not being

pinched between the small, rigid income and the steadily rising prices. That department store played the very devil with our peace of mind. It multiplied enormously the apparent necessities of life, and brought the luxuries just within our reach.

Now on this absorbing question, that of making ends meet, the four orthodox churches had nothing to say. The organist of the Episcopal church lived diagonally across the street from us; she was driven to "keep roomers" as the suburb expanded, and I noticed curiously, as a boy, that in spite of the social superiority of her church she was in her own conversation as much obsessed by the economic problem as was my hard-pressed Presbyterian mother. The Baptists and the Methodists were shameless bargain-hunters. In short, we were all in the same plight, and we were all equally tender of our religious faiths. I mean that, until New Thought came in, we all acted exactly alike in regarding religion as something to be held off, away from the economic struggle.

Then there came filtering into the suburb bits of a new and almost incredible gospel. There were rumors of new sects springing up, which made the largest, stiffest claims regarding the relationship between religion and health, and religion and prosperity. . . .

New Thought came definitely into our suburban consciousness through the "Christ Scientists," a sect which differentiated itself carefully from the Christian Scientists in title, ecclesiastical structure, and what the suburban fathers crudely called its "lingo." The chief exponent of Christ Science was a former Congregational clergyman named Van Epps, a rather frail, agreeable gentleman who impressed everybody favorably, he seemed so intellectual and so free from the least trace of the charlatan. Somehow or other — I have quite forgotten how — he established local connections, borrowed the use of a private home for

Sunday services, and, finally, set up a regular church which met every Sunday morning in the little auditorium of our suburban clubhouse.

I shall never forget the stir his sermons created. His services were of marked simplicity, — indeed, quite severe in their details, — but he was easily the most quoted man in the town. At first, only the bolder and more restless spirits ventured out to hear him; it was an affair of some delicacy, since your presence at his church was quite likely to be reported at your own; but sooner or later a large proportion of the community had sampled New Thought, and was deep in the discussion of it.

Some, of course, were promptly impressed with New Thought because it was new. I don't know why, exactly, but somehow the new in those days had a prestige which it does n't seem to enjoy to-day. We believed in Progress, and I guess we were pretty artless about it. Look at the advances in sciences, we would argue; for that matter, look at the changes in the town itself! Look at the elevated railroad; above all, look at the department store eight miles away, offering unheard-of economies — that bankrupt the whole community! The old was well enough, but the fact is that Truth is like a procession which moves simply and majestically on. It was this sense of the cosmic process which led the plump Miss Fulton to subscribe so promptly to the new faith. Miss Fulton, if she had been a man, would have been a "joiner."

Somewhat akin to Miss Fulton in type were those doughty souls, of whom there were several in our suburb, who were drawn to this "new and despised sect" from a secret and romantic desire to recapture the spirit and experience of the early Christians. They could n't be told, outwardly, from their conventional neighbors, but inwardly they burned with a flame. They gloried in the contrast between what they conceived to be the potential

power of New Thought and its statistical unimportance. A dash of martyrdom would have made it perfect!

But the thing which most deeply stirred our suburb was the frank and uncompromising way in which New Thought addressed itself to our bread-and-butter problems, the problems posed for us by that amazing department store. New Thought promised economic redemption in this world, and we were vastly more startled at that, — really, I am measuring my words when I say this, — we were vastly more startled at that than we were at the most lavish and specific assurances regarding salvation in the next. Remember, dear reader, as you loll gracefully on your dividends, that for us the old order had changed only yesterday, as it were; that the old traditional security, open to all thrifty, hard-working folks, had disappeared, and that in its place was a bewildering struggle to adjust rigid incomes to ascending prices. Not a pulpit in our suburb had addressed itself to this plebeian anxiety, this perpetual concern, until New Thought came in.

Given the right attitude of mind, said Van Epps (an attitude, I may explain, parenthetically, to be secured from him in twenty lessons for ten dollars, with an advanced course of ten lessons for students and teacher), and you could tap the boundless resources of the universe. Most sermons, I have discovered, are exercises in synonyms; those of Van Epps rang the changes on "reservoir" and "storehouse" and "abundant life." Every Sunday morning he held up over our heads, in his frail scholarly hands, a vast cornucopia from which he poured out — bathing us in it — health, wealth, harmony, energy, abundant life. I want to give Van Epps his due — never in my life have I seen faces so transfigured as were the faces of those who left the secular atmosphere of that suburban clubhouse every Sunday morning.

Take Langdon, for example. He was the "Western

representative" of an Eastern "concern" — happy nomenclature! — under a contract which ran for three years at a stretch. Every time it was up for renewal, Langdon and his wife went through a perfect hell of worry. They had been through five of them, and Langdon's head was gray at forty. Twice out of the five renewals he had succeeded in securing an increase in salary; twice he had been refused, coldly and flatly; and once, I believe, the unequal contest had ended in some sort of a draw. When I knew the Langdons, it is scarcely too much to say that they were living three years at a time, their minds averted from the future.

Langdon worshiped in the Presbyterian church, three pews behind us and over to the right. He was counted a good churchman; I think he was clerk of the Board, or something busy like that. But what, I ask you, did Langdon really care about muscular Christianity? What did he care how many boys the minister taught to box? What did he care for the sportsmanlike theology which the headmaster of Rugby had worked out for the pacification of English schoolboys, and upon which we were fed, willy-nilly? The answer is that he did n't fundamentally care a straw, except possibly during the year following the renewal of his contract, when he was in such high spirits that he would have subscribed cheerfully to anything!

Our whole suburb was made up of "Western representatives," of "sales managers," of "chief clerks," of struggling doctors and lawyers. Langdon's plight, in one form or another, was the common plight. When the spiritual Van Epps declared flatly that security and health and abundance were the privilege of all, he struck a chord to which every heart in our town thrilled.

Nevertheless, of course, there was a big fight on. The invasion was not one to be endured. . . . Van Epps and his intense little wife did quite a bit of "mental healing"

— to the great disdain of the young M.D's. in our town. Their method was to sit for half an hour or so at the bedside of the patient, in unbroken silence, apparently inwardly absorbed in removing those "mental conditions" which they held primarily responsible for the physical state. But the most striking demonstration which the Van Epps made was one which had little or no observable relationship to their metaphysics. One afternoon, Van Epps took his wife to one of the homes where an advanced study class was to meet. He left her there, and went on his way to the University some eight blocks distant. He had been gone about fifteen minutes when some metaphysical question arose in the class, and somebody expressed the wish that Van Epps himself were present to elucidate the point. Mrs. Van Epps promptly said she would call him. She stepped out on the front porch and stood, so the story goes, with her hands on the railings, staring fixedly in the direction of the University. Van Epps was blocks away, indistinguishable. Not a sound came from her lips. In three or four minutes she returned to the class. "He has turned back," she announced calmly. "He ought to be here in ten minutes." In ten minutes or so the doorbell rang, and Van Epps entered. He turned to his wife: "Did you call me?" he said.

Well, that episode simply tore the town in two. You either believed, or you did n't believe, and would n't! The feeling aroused was intense. Those women who were so fortunate as to have been there when the thing occurred, had to repeat the story, on demand, a score of times. Those who belonged to Van Epps's congregation looked upon the incident, logically or not, as clear unmistakable evidence that this man had the Truth.

What does the Good Book say about the people — how they seek a sign? I suppose it is a universal trait. I know that there were Presbyterians who, for several weeks after

that, struggled with the disloyal idea that somehow muscular Christianity was a rather sterile thing, sterile in signs, at any rate. They looked at the minister's tan — he never had time, in between his long, strenuous open-air vacations, to get a proper pastoral pallor! — and wondered at the local paradox, that it was he who was now preaching Christian acceptance of sickness and suffering, and the frail Van Epps who harped on health and abounding energy; that it was the substantial he who now insisted that religion should be a matter of immaterial values, and the pale scholarly Van Epps who declared roundly that it should be a matter of red corpuscles, of suburban houses and lots, of vulgar increases in salary. The episode, with one thing and another, jarred Langdon loose from the Presbyterian church, and with him went Leonard, a tall gaunt commuter who was envied because he had as good as a life-job with the Standard Oil Company, and four or five women, including my mother. I went along too, but I was too young to be counted by either camp as a loss or an asset.

Van Epps's sermons were — I don't know how to describe it exactly — somehow very "regular." He was a great lover of formal logic, a born metaphysician. You may think that his ideas were absurd and irregular, but I know they did n't seem so to him. His mind, to him, was swept and garnished; poverty was abolished in a syllogism; pain and failure were neatly negated; adventure was either eliminated or reduced to comfortable proportions!

But, my goodness, while this was true of him, it was scarcely true of us! With the best intentions in the world, he shipped us off on a chartless sea. Pamphlets began to stream into the house, and little piebald journals, all of them advancing confidently some new and engaging aspect of the Truth. My sister bought a Ouija board and literally scraped acquaintance with an Indian guide who, I am

pained to relate, was wholly unsuccessful in guiding me to the spot where I had lost my sweetheart's opal ring. My mother stumbled upon "Karezza" as the solution of all marital difficulties, and spent several strenuous years, just before her death, in trying to lead my old-fashioned father into the acceptance of that distinctly *fin de siècle* version of the blest tie that binds. I myself went in for Ralph Waldo Trine's *In Tune with the Infinite*, one of the best-sellers among New Thought books, which sold by thousands in that department store before the regular, orthodox bookstores woke up to the demand. I also dabbled a bit, contentedly, in some of the large, useful-if-true assertions of the Rosicrucians, and had a pleasant winter in a course of study, by mail, under a New Thought teacher who lived in Florida and who was afterward caught — quite unjustly, as I still believe — in the rather cheap and wholly gratuitous prosecutions of the Federal postal authorities.

Death overtook Van Epps — I fancy the man had been fighting him off for years — and Mrs. Van Epps moved silently away. The Leonards became spiritualists; the plump Miss Fulton remains, I believe, eclectic in taste and, no doubt, is still happily browsing. After a year of boredom I moved painlessly into a state of happy nescience.

Shams? Well, no, not exactly — merely part of the characteristic mental furnishings of the period, I should say: a sort of department-store religion, a vast hodgepodge of promise and half-fulfillment, the shopper's El Dorado, dedicated shrewdly, honestly — in its way, reverently — to the everlasting exploitation of the New.

THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH

TRISTRAM BROWN, COBBLER

The Sun (New York)

The case of Mr. Tristram Brown, of Georgetown, Massachusetts is interesting to those of us who find this a pretty decent sort of world and have no objection to staying in it for a time. Mr. Brown was ninety-one on Tuesday. As a man of experience in the matter of birthday anniversaries, he made no great hullabaloo about the day. These occasions are very pleasant when the candles in the cake are not too numerous. There comes a time when even men are shy about mentioning them. In early-middle and late-middle age they are generally voted to be a nuisance. Those mediæval persons are acutely afraid of growing old. Perhaps the trouble is that they have premature fears that they will not live to be old. Youth is over in a streak. Comparing himself with the younkers, the man of middle life may feel patriarchal. When he has passed the eighties he may have a modest pride in his constitution and begin to nurse the honorable ambition to live to be a hundred. No birthdays between forty and eighty; after eighty, unobtrusive announcements of each birthday: that is a judicious rule. If you are old, as foolish people and calendars count the years, at least have the credit of it and do your part in illustrating the survival of the fittest. But aside from the gratification of making another point in a difficult game in which you are sure to lose at the last, a birthday anniversary need not be much to a patriarch. We cannot believe that Methuselah was in the habit of giving birthday parties after he was in his second century. These are the toys of girls and boys.

Well, to come back to Mr. Tristram Brown. He "spent

the day as usual in his little cobbler-shop on Main Street." He obeyed the voice at eve he obeyed at prime. He is a New Hampshire boy by birth, and learned cobbling in the New Hampshire town of Warren in 1827. He has worked at his trade ever since. How many of the brethren of St. Crispin can equal that record? Seventy-five years on the cobbler's bench! Where are the deans of the other trades? Can any one of them beat the record of Cobbler Tristram Brown of Georgetown? If any, speak.

What a picture of honest, laborious, useful life! Seventy-five years he has been sitting in his little cobbler-shop. We can hear the sound of his hammer, tapping, tapping, and see the pegs between his lips. The room is fragrant with the smell of leather. No doubt the sages of the village there collect. Cobblers absorb much wisdom. They have high foreheads, as a rule, we think, and are usually reticent, thoughtful men when the effervescence of youth is over. For some reason young cobblers are, or used to be, skilled baseball-players if they take to the field of summer evenings. The old-fashioned cobblers whom boys loved to watch had such an air of mystery about them and were so quick and skillful at their business that they were well thought of by their juvenile observers. To be sure, the blacksmith was necessarily the greatest man in the world except a railroad engineer; still the cobbler was looked up to. If sedate and musical he played the bass viol; if frivolous, the fiddle.

Mr. Brown has lived in the same house for sixty-one years. His shop is in sight of it. The good, old-fashioned habit. The doctors were always telling their patients and their friends to have plenty of change of scene, plenty of amusement and relaxation, to diversify their industries, so to speak, keep out of ruts, devise new pursuits and interests, and so prevent life from growing stale and the arteries of perception and emotion from hardening. And

that's the way to live long and be young, the learned leeches tell you. A good way, but not the only one, nor always the surest one. Tristram Brown changes from shop to house and from house to shop, and pegs away for seventy-five years. There is something cordial and attractive in the picture of this uneventful, tranquil life. We like to fancy that even Death has bowels and relentings, and waits as long as he can before calling at that peaceful door. May Tristram Brown score his round hundred, at the very least, before pegging out.'

THE OLDEST LIVING GRADUATE

The Sun (New York)

The King has no solitary preëminence in never dying. He shares his mortal immortality with another potentate and great public character, the Oldest Graduate. There is always an Oldest Graduate; and always there are heirs waiting for the succession. Mr. Benjamin D. Silliman, distinguished and fortunate in so many other regards, was also for some time the Oldest Living Graduate of Yale; and now that honor belongs to Judge Cutler of '29, who lives in Waterbury, where they make the watches. May these be wound up for many a day before he yields his crown to the heir apparent. At ninety-three the Oldest Living Graduate is or should be but a boy. After waiting seventy-odd years for his title, he will be in no hurry to give it up. He should occupy it to the full, be merciful in his reminiscences, and look with an indulgent pity on the lads of ninety and ninety-one who want his job.

For, flower unloved of Amaryllis though it be, this honor is greatly prized. The survivor in this Tontine has beaten all his contemporaries at college. He can say to Time, as Beranger said: —

> Old Postilion, hold up, hold up;
> Let us drink a stirrup cup.

It is too much for this glory to go to a man otherwise famous, as Mr. Silliman was or as Horace Binney was. The latter, an illustrious lawyer whose fame is perhaps as dim now as that of most lawyers who have not held high political office, was graduated at Harvard in 1797, if we remember well, and he was the oldest living Harvard man for some time before he was cut off in '95. An Oldest

Living Graduate who has no other fame than that is to be preferred. Such was Joseph Head of Harvard, of 1804. He lived in some little town. With his bent form, his Van Winkle beard, his long staff, he looked what he was as he marched among the younger generations in the yard on Commencement Day, "the oldest living grad-oo-ate," as he pronounced it after the fashion of his rural youth. Good old Joseph Head — if that was his name! One thinks with kindness of him, and all his predecessors, and of all his successors in the procession.

In every college from A to Z something of affection attaches to the college elder and leader of the line. Of ordinary distinction the graduate may grow tired, be it his or that of a classmate. Of the class of 1825 at Bowdoin, of 1829 at Harvard, of 1853 at Yale, it has been possible to hear too much. At Brunswick, in 1875, Mr. Blaine happily expressed the weariness which the constant celebration of the celebrated brings. "I am glad to hear," said he, "that those members of the class of 1825 who were illustrious on earth are happy in heaven."

The graduate whose ambition it is to become the Oldest Living Graduate scorns all loud and easier fames. In seclusion and with perfect modesty of spirit, he sets before himself early the high goal. He accepts philosophically all detriments which Fate and Fortune send. "I am no longer young," he says to himself, "but why should I wish to be? Everybody who stays in the game must get old, and how few can become the Oldest Living Graduate? I am not handsome, witty, eloquent, or even popular; I don't have to be, in my business, which is that of living to be the O.L.G. My classmate, Hooker Haynes, has made most of the money there is in the world. My classmate, Brattle Holyoke, has married most of the rest. I don't need money in my business. Byles is a Bishop, Dwight is a Senator. Bill Trumbull is a Trust. I have n't any office. I don't

direct anything. I have little property and less hair. But I think I can outlive every man of my class and I mean to do it. Let them last into the nineties if they can. I'll take an even hundred, and one to carry, if necessary."

The young chaps just out of college may not know this harmless ambition at first. They are too young — confound 'em! We remember hearing George Bancroft, sixty years after his graduation, imparting the fact to a freshman. The freshman gaped and gasped in wonder. How was it possible for a man to have graduated sixty years ago! If Nebuchadnezzar had come into the room and tried to sell a book on vegetarianism, that freshman could not have been more surprised. But youth 's a stuff will not endure. It does n't take the truly wise graduate long to find the most reasonable object of desire. He nourishes the gentle vision in his heart. He sees himself a well-preserved ancient of ninety-eight, with a face like a Baldwin apple and still tolerable legs. His gold-headed cane is less a staff than a part of his make-up; 't is a representative of the monumental pomp of age. He wears, for effect, a tall hat of the fashion of fifty years before. He prides himself on the cut of his frock coat. His surviving hair is soft and white. A perfect gentleman of the old school. "Young gentlemen," says the Oldest Living Graduate, "I ascribe my remarkable health and long life to the fact that for seventy-five years I have never smoked nor drunk." "Boys," he says, to a few striplings of ninety-odd assembled around the punch bowl, "I attribute my good health and looks to the fact that for eighty years I have taken a nip of good stuff regularly every day. But I never overdid it as you do."

We once knew an Oldest Living Graduate who would walk on the railroad track, although he was nearly a hundred and deaf as a post. This is encouraging for beginners, as it seems to show that the O.L.G. is born, not made by

training. Only a very few years ago there happened to live in the same town the Oldest Living Graduate and the Next-to-the-oldest Living graduate. They were great cronies and as lively as crickets. But each watched the distressingly robust health of the other with some alarm.

"William is looking a leetle peaked," John would say; "I'm afraid he won't live through the winter." "John's failin'," William would say; "he ought n't be out in the cold so much at his age." And both lived in health to the very edge of the hundred.

The man who will devote himself with a single mind to becoming the Oldest Living Graduate deserves to be happy.

TOPS AND MARBLES

Boston Globe

It must be spring, for the little boys in the West End are playing marbles, and in an alley off Newspaper Row yesterday two little Italian boys (who were supposed to be lugging boxes of kindling wood home to the North End) were spinning tops. I regret to add that they had affixed to this sport a species of African golf which was quite new to my unsophisticated country mind. They explained it to me, when satisfied that I was not a plain-clothes man. You chalk a circle on the pavement and each put a penny in the centre. Then start your top, scoop it up on the palm of your hand while it is spinning and. . . . (But perhaps there is a plain-clothes man in the audience.)

Tops and marbles, country lanes or city streets, put a boy where you will — a boy he will remain. Tops and marbles are the first harbingers of spring; and, cover the earth with paving blocks how you will, these pretty crocuses of childhood-custom will sprout between their chinks.

Do little boys play marbles in Russia and spin tops in Italy? At any rate, no sooner do little Russian and Italian boys take root in this soil than they conform to childhood's immemorial custom.

Your child is your true conservative. Mr. Walter Eaton, in a burst of praiseworthy candor, tells of how, as a small boy in Reading, Massachusetts, he learned, along with every other small boy, the rhymes of a naughty ballad — which one he does not specify. By that peculiar tenacity with which memory seems to house such dubious guests, he never forgot it, and was electrified, some years later, at finding it in a volume of ancient English poetry — *Percy's*

Reliques, I think he said; though this is unlikely, for the collector of that celebrated volume was a bishop. At all events, he had not supposed it could have been printed, nor could it have been (short of a Broadway farce), except as a curiosity of literature.

But it illustrates the tenacious conservatism of childhood. We think of adult traditions as having stubborn vitality. They are nothing to the traditions of childhood. The customs passed along by adults may have a span of twenty to fifty years from one generation to the next. But here in childhood the generation span is less than a decade, sometimes less than half a dozen years to a generation. This ancient English ballad — treasured, for better or for worse, by the little boys — was of a sort only repeated during the brief years of adolescence, which narrows the generation to perhaps four years; and yet these tiny tradition-spans had passed on these rhymes down dizzying dynasties of boyhood for centuries.

Now, as every psychologist knows, the child's mind is that of the tribal savage. He goes through, in a few years, phases which it took the human race centuries to outgrow. The child has his Stone Age, his Iron Age, and so on. Tell him a story and he will remember it exactly. Try to vary an incident the next time you tell it to him and he will demand to have the original version restored.

This seems to indicate that the mind which, in adult years, continues to develop normally grows more and more receptive to new ideas and changes of custom, and that the mind which dislikes such changes is still a child's, suffering, perhaps, from arrested development. Of course a mind may be a mixture, welcoming some kinds of changes and hostile to other kinds; but what is this but another way of saying the same thing — that that part of the mind which resists new departures is childish and that part which welcomes innovation is mature? Conservatism is of child-

hood. Readiness for change is of manhood. The most radical minds of any period are always spoken of as "advanced."

Yet conservatism, whether of or in childhood, has its uses and its beauty. Like the little boys playing marbles and spinning tops, as harbingers of spring, it is nature's jog to remind us of the long, long road we have traveled — not to forget among the bleak landscapes of adult personal and social responsibilities the blossoming meadows which bordered the highway when we set out.

THE COWARDICE OF YOUTH

The *Times* (London)

Youth is admitted to be careless and cruel, but indulgence is claimed for these failings on the strength of courage. We see youth as gay and dashing; we imagine it in bright armor, forcing its way through thickets where knowledge and patience lie tangled, conquering with its virgin sword giants and blatant beasts whom experience is afraid to attack. *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait!* we sigh; and all the while we envy in our secret hearts the ignorance of youth, which we persuade ourselves to be merely a blessed ignorance of danger.

Youth is not afraid, we say; youth does not know what the dangers are, and the dangers melt away before its splendid ignorance. Safe conventions, the public order, accommodation and adjustment — of these youth knows nothing. It is sufficient for itself, and needs no bolstering with the down or sheltering with the screens which we of middle age, bruised and wary after our encounters with life, have constructed for our comfort. If we have any faith in man, we enjoy, with a kind of submissive fondness, the din made by "the younger generation knocking at the door." It is going to bundle us out of our comfortable habitation; but then, how fine a place it is going to make of it! Youth will clear away our dusty, musty furniture, and throw the windows wide and flood the old house with air and light! Youth will blunder, of course, but its blunders will be noble blunders; youth is insensitive and hard; but we are glad to pay that price for its high confidence, its gay courage.

Such is the common view. It has the authority of

tradition, and no one begins to doubt its truth until he begins to look straight at the youth of his acquaintance. Then he will be fortunate if he does not meet with cases in which it appears romantic, and (unlike most romance) the flat opposite of the truth. A schoolboy or an undergraduate has his intellectual and emotional confidence. Under the shadow of mediæval walls, under the care of mediæval institutions, he will hold, or at least pronounce — and sometimes for so long as a month on end — opinions so "advanced" as to amuse his teachers and frighten his parents. There is nothing to prevent his doing so, and no courage is needed to make a brave show of independence. Take the same hothead after he has been for a year or two in the world, and it too often happens that you will find no trace of the courage of youth. Too often it is the young men who cling for safety to the accepted opinion and the comfort of public order; the young men who dread the exceptional in circumstance and character, who sneer at experiment, and would see the world "run" according to the norm of the bricklayer — which is the slowest work of the slowest worker. And no doubt there is every excuse for them. Impatient of restraint, and contemptuous of educational tradition, they flung out into a world that was to make easy way for them; and after one tussle they found themselves scuttling for protection to the rear of the slow-moving main army. And there, unable to boast of courage, they will boast of their prudence and appeal to the wisdom of numbers.

It must not be supposed that their case is hopeless. Theirs will never be the greatness of the few who are brave from birth till death, and, as life goes on, add to courage and gayety the sympathy and understanding of experience. But they will, if they are not terrified out of spiritual existence, some day be middle-aged; and in the middle-aged men who have kept their faith lie the courage and

purpose of the world. The middle-aged man knows what youth can never know — what it is that he wants for himself and for society. He knows his own strength and his own weakness, which he has learned whether he would or not. Amid moral and social man's array of adjustments and accommodations with reality, amid his means of protection against the truth, he has made up his mind which are worth preserving and which are not. And, unless he has the misfortune to be among those who are born sneerers, the middle-aged man, finding his enthusiasm grow with his experience, can afford a pitying smile for youth's general claim to courage.

YOUTH

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Among the new voices in our literature there are but few that have the specific note of youth. The brave and original things have been done by minds that have matured toward critical perceptions and had time to brood upon their own past. It is not merely or indeed chiefly a question of years. Ardor, freshness, the soaring mood and the lyrical passion — these may proceed from the thirties as well as from the twenties. But our men of talent are terribly well weaponed. Their passion is always tempered with sagacity. Their verse depends upon a well-considered theory of poetics and their fiction upon a grimly ordered view of life. Nor do they hold these theories and views with the joy of discoverers and prophets but with the calm and silent tenacity of middle-age.

Exceptions, real or apparent, will occur to every observer. He will not deny our point that we have in America nothing comparable to the spirit of the youths who gathered, some years ago, about Jules Romains or those who are now gathering about Hermann Hesse or Franz Werfel. It may be a salutary thing that our literature, like that of England, does not take kindly to groups and movements, since these have, no doubt, an ugly habit of hardening into orthodoxies. Yet when one thinks of the early days of the symbolist movement and of the mystic and delightful evenings which young men passed in those days in the plain library of Mallarmé, one gains a deep sense of something precious that one missed and that others are now missing in the isolation that is so obvious a note of the intellectual life of America.

It is curious that precisely here where the group spirit is so strong, the life of the mind should be lived in an almost monastic fashion. It is a matter of common observation how in our great universities the fraternities and athletic organizations look upon withdrawal or isolation with an almost malevolent eye and how, on the other hand, those youths who live a deep inner life and nourish the passions of the soul shrink shyly from comradeship and communication and have to conquer a thousand inhibitions before they will reveal themselves. The result is that each faces himself and the pains of his development alone and in secret, and may even come to regard his superiority as an eccentricity or a fault. No one can say how much tragic waste this process involves. It is clear that very sensitive minds can be easily hushed and driven into a constantly hardening outer conformity with the flat doings of the day.

We need, it would almost seem, some league of youth, some means of making the spirit of youth become one with itself and articulate. Yet this means must not have any of the marks of an organization. There must be no machinery or chapters or dues or by-laws. The young men who created the modern literature and then the modern polity of Ireland seemed to have none of these things. Yet when you speak to one of them you hear at once how they met and philosophized and plotted and were intimate with each other's minds and aims, and drew from these contacts and from the very oppositions involved in them that high valor which has marked them in both literature and life. Other examples occur to one easily, even to the vain and harsh eccentricities of the Dadaists. And all examples lead to the same conclusion that youth, to become articulate and effective, needs this coöperation of the spirit, these meetings in shabby rooms and taverns, this common ardor, and comradely adventure, and high debate.

We have not the tradition of such things, and any group

of young men and women in America will find it hard to avoid the contamination of the "social event" or of subservience to some practical and elderly minded leader. And they will be hampered, too, by the vast distances that will separate group from group, and many groups will be smothered by the fact that they cannot meet except in a "parlor" or a class-room or an ice-cream shop. But these difficulties are small when we consider what depends on the event. It is nothing less than the future of the creative spirit, which is always the liberal or radical spirit from the point of view of its own day, in America.

To-day all signs are favorable but our progress is still slow enough to wear out the most dauntless. For a country's culture cannot be reckoned only by the number of books that are written or pictures that are painted. The great question is rather how many creative and original lives are lived. And it is in this respect that we seem poor and feeble. Great audiences produce great artists even as great peoples produce freedom. Our hope is in youth, in the liberation of youth from the oppression of gross custom, from the tyranny of sport and shallow correctness. That liberation, like every liberation that counts, must come from within. But it can be aided and quickened and saved in a thousand cases by the expressed awareness, at least, that the liberal youth of the country is everywhere conscious of its own spirit toward the creative tasks that await it.

STUDENT INACTIVITIES

The Freeman

ALTHOUGH we are not personally acquainted with the history of the societies which figure so largely in the rites of "Tap Day" at Yale, we are quite willing to believe that each of these orders owes its establishment to some common interest which animated its founders. If this is so, then the societies at their inception were just so many avenues of self-expression for the members. They were not destructive of individuality; they were based upon a previously developed likeness in individual interests, and they therefore gave the opportunity and the stimulus for the further development of these interests.

In our opinion, this sort of spontaneous association is highly desirable in every field of activity, and nowhere more so than in collegiate circles. The thing that makes it desirable is this quality of spontaneity; it is this quality, and no other, that distinguishes the association that grows out of individuality from the association that destroys individuality. The question is the old one, whether the institution is made for man or man for the institution; and everybody who knows anything about the conditions of student life in American colleges knows quite well that although the student speaks of "making" this or that society, the rule is that he is made for and by the society. Very frequently from the day of his matriculation, and sometimes for months or years before, the student is moulding and trimming himself to meet the standards of some preëxistent brotherhood which will mould and trim him still more precisely to pattern, once he has been initiated into the mysteries.

The college world has no monopoly on this sort of thing, of course, but it does seem to us that something might be done and ought to be done, to relieve the young collegian of a pressure such as the full-formed adult is seldom subjected to, and perhaps could seldom resist. When we say this much, we no doubt lay upon ourselves the obligation to go further, and to lay out something in the way of constructive and practical suggestion. We are not altogether sure that we can do this, but if we had a college on our hands, we should give every possible encouragement to the inception of new student-associations, and put every possible obstacle in the way of their becoming formal and permanent. We should not stop to inquire into the nature of the interests expressed in these new undertakings: whether it were books or beer, we should be perfectly satisfied to let things take their course, if only the whole lot and parcel of groups could be dissolved and the ground cleared, about once a year.

In other words, we should depend wholly upon the lecture-room, the library, and the laboratory to give the student the necessary contact with the form and tradition of the past; and we should put our best endeavor into the maintenance of complete spontaneity and genuine anarchism in the field of "student activities," so-called. We do not know just how we should accomplish this result, and perhaps we could not accomplish it at all; but if we did, we should have gone a long way toward lifting the dead hand of rigid formalism that controls student life, and establishing in the collegiate sphere those requisites for the development of the complete man which von Humboldt summarizes so superbly as "freedom, and a variety of situation."

PREFERENCES AND PREJUDICES

THE SILENT WOMAN

ALICE DUER MILLER

A FRIEND of mine — in fact to be open, an editor of the *New Republic* — once told me that he should become an antifeminist if, in general conversation where topics of public interest were under discussion, intelligent women continued, as now, to sit silent and let the men do all the talking. Why do they do it? he demanded. Why do women feel no obligation to contribute to such talk?

My heart sank, as your heart does sink on first hearing a criticism you know is going to turn out on examination to be just. My friend was right: women do not take their part in conversation on serious subjects. Why?

But the answer, I find, is very simple: women do not talk because men will not listen to them.

The really interesting question is, why will not men listen? Some people will say offhand that it is because women have nothing to say worth hearing; but let us put these reactionaries out of court. Others tell me that the feminine temperament allows itself to be dominated by the male, and whatever its intellectual skill, gets wiped out in the rough-and-tumble of general conversation, just as whatever its manual dexterity, it would get wiped out in a physical fight. A woman I know offers still another explanation: she says that women do not put their ideas into solemn enough, heavy enough, boring enough form. "Think of the forms men have invented for letter-writing," she says. "They actually like the yours-to-hand-and-contents-noted style. Do you think the average office would pay any attention to a letter that began: 'Got your letter and oddly enough read it'?" In confirmation of her theory

she likes to go on and tell how in a mixed group the other day presidential possibilities were being discussed, and she, who had some opportunities of hearing inside gossip, said: "Henry Gould Pitts is going to be a candidate." No one answered, no one commented, no one paid any more attention to her than if she had made an irrelevant remark about the weather. But, after a few minutes, one of the men said this: —

"I should not wish to be quoted, but I do not mind saying in such a group as this, that I have been reliably informed — although of course it would be impossible at this time to put more than a minimum of dependence on any information, however reliable its source — that (pause) Henry Gould Pitts is to be a candidate." An electric thrill ran through the audience, many of the men asserting that the idea was an entirely new one to them, and that they had never before heard Pitts's name mentioned in this connection.

"Oh, yes, my dear," my friend adds, "they like to be bored; they think it's frivolous to put their minds on anything unless it's tiresome. Look at their special man-made institutions — the pulpit, Congress, and after-dinner speaking."

There is probably something in her idea; but to my mind, the true explanation is even simpler. Men hate to listen, but regard it as the necessary price of being listened to. They have to listen to other men, who shout, interrupt, or sulk if not listened to. It seems to be a real sex-difference. Men would rather be listened to than liked. Women would rather be liked than listened to. Most people get what they want most.

LOQUACIOUS MAN: HIS ANSWER

FRANCIS HACKETT

MRS. MILLER believes that women are "people." She seems to deny that men, too, are "people," and not necessarily all of a kind. Men shout and sulk and interrupt? Can you hear Colonel House shouting or see Bernard Shaw sulking? Can you imagine the silken Arthur Balfour jumping down anyone's throat with interruptions? Won't Mrs. Miller please move over and make a little room for men — or some men — inside the human race?

What would happen to a man in feminist circles who said this: "Women would rather be liked than listened to"? Anyone who has heard or even seen the Boss of New York, Miss Mary Garrett Hay, knows just exactly how universal this Law of the Shrinking Violet is. And can anyone imagine Miss Thomas of Bryn Mawr saying, or thinking, "I'd rather be liked than listened to"? I've known some chorus girls (two) of rather limited powers of conversation. They would rather be liked than listened to. But they were exceptional. Even at the risk of arousing displeasure, I confess out of my own experience, women persist in addressing me. Particularly when I am working. I wish I knew more women who'd rather be liked than listened to. Have I picked the Xantippes and George Eliots and Christabel Pankhursts? Miss Christabel Pankhurst, I give my word, would rather be listened to than eat.

But, Mrs. Miller says, men are solemn, men are heavy, men are boring. Men? Anatole France? Gilbert Murray? Colonel Roosevelt? Max Beerbohm? German men? French men? New Republic editors? Or — just men? It is an extensive sex.

American men whose business it is to discuss topics of public interest have their own manners, I admit, in pursuing their life of discussion. They are not the manners of well-bred social intercourse. Such business men — and they are business men — early discard the practice of sympathetic personal attention, if it was ever in their nature or in their breeding to bestow it. There can be no real hospitality without such sympathy, but when they meet people at lunch or dinner these professional inquirers are not extending hospitality. They are meeting to exchange news and ideas.

Their notion of conducting this exchange is open to the charge of being much too arbitrary and harsh. They tend to divide people into the important and the unimportant. They are intolerant and unresponsive unless the conversation is likely to help them in their business. They believe that more is to be gained by nongenial or at most semigenial inquisition than by more delicate provocation and stimulation. But the mistake is to identify such meals with hospitality. These luncheons and dinners have only an appearance of social intercourse. They are devised because they provide a convenient arrangement for general publicist conversation. In the case of true hospitality, personal intercourse is destined to be promoted by the imagination and tact of the host. Whether conversation becomes general or not, the host or the hostess sees to it that every personality in the company is, in the simplest of all phrases, made at home. But among American business men — whether their business is politics or writing or handing down the word of God or teaching or practising law — there is no living conception of such tact and imagination, and no such respect for personality, especially diffident personality. It seems a waste of time. Instead of that permeation of good will which is the essence of hospitality, the visitor is provided with more or less willing

auditors, and if he has anything to say, he is supposed to know enough to shoot. Once the ordinary barbarian awkwardness is overcome, he usually does shoot. He may want to talk about income tax or dry farming or rural credit or the Omsk government or the merchant marine. So long as he carries the discussion a little ahead of the daily newspapers and a little above the ponderosity of the encyclopædia, he is very likely to get away with it. Quite often, even on a "dull" topic, a man who is alive may ignite another man, and a profitable discussion reward the listeners. And of course, no matter how dull it is you can always go on eating bread.

Personally I prefer the host-and-guest equation to the equation of hare-and-hounds. I think a skillful host or hostess, even if burdened with brains, can do infinitely more with a guest than the hungriest pack of inquisitors or listeners. But public topics breed public men, and public men must be as handy as public telephones. Everyone knows the bright glad impersonal stare of a new hotel-lobby or a great railway-station. When a public man presents this aspect to a set of contemporaries, they know that he requires no sympathetic evocation. Mrs. Miller is right about his entire class: he'd rather be listened to than liked.

This does not touch woman's silence during general publicist conversation. When a well-bred person, man or woman, finds himself projected into a world of such impersonal practices, he usually shrinks. The woman commonly takes refuge in a busy private conversation with her neighbor. All around, as she conceives it, a rough-and-tumble conversation is taking place, with great hulking men dominating and being dominated, and shouting and interrupting and sulking. While she, Victorianly enough, is content to have a quiet tête-à-tête. Granted that the impersonal business meal is nonfriendly, especially to

people without a good deal of assurance, the worst accompaniment in the world to a round-table conversation is this single anarchic tête-à-tête. The Victorian lady, in other words, is just out of place on such an occasion. If she is going to remain, she ought to surrender something of her sovereignty and try to join the league.

In round-table talk, must women be out of it? Only when they cling to their unfulfilled social expectations. When the occasion is genial, and the round-table is guaranteed against the egoist and the man with any purpose save a genial purpose, the conversation is quite as often in the hands of a woman as of a man, and the brute male has no advantage whatever. When the purpose is not primarily genial, the woman is always handicapped if she have the wrong presumptions. But when she gives up those presumptions in her own desire to convert her rude and unchivalrous audience to suffrage or Bolshevism or intervention in Russia, the big reasons for such unsocial occasions are at once perceived.

There are men and women to whom unsocial sociality is impossible, who invest their least human contact with the warm clasp of their nature. But to ask this affluence of public men and their luncheons and dinners is to ask for unlimited personality and style. If personality and style were as common as that, we should scarcely need public men or have public questions. Perhaps public men with their meagre manners and public questions with their huge impedimenta are only the solemn, heavy, boring preliminary to the days when everyone will be listened to and everyone liked.

THE TERRORS OF TALK

CANON LANGBRIDGE

THERE was talk at an Irish inn concerning a certain landlord of extreme unpopularity, who had been permitted to leave this world entirely at his own time and convenience.

"'T was an outrage on the laws of civilized society," exclaimed a scandalized listener. "Was there ne'er an Irishman to see fair play, and put the taste of a bullet through him?"

"'T was criminal neglect entirely," said another, shaking his head; "but there, I suppose what was everybody's business was nobody's business."

That theory seems to explain a good many untoward survivals, and particularly that of Dr. Johnson. That that intolerable person, that murderer of social amenity, that cutthroat of the gentle give-and-take of good talk, that strangler of timid thought, that heavy-weight champion talker and knocker-out-in-one-round, was permitted to hold his Bloody Assize at the Club for so long a term, unchecked and unchallenged, is hardly explicable on other grounds. Goldsmith, sorely aggrieved, and Beauclerk, half humorously, did sometimes rebel under the heavy hand, but nobody ever seems to have imposed on himself, as an urgent public duty, the removal from earth of the big Bow-Wow. He was allowed to contradict, to interrupt, to insult, to shout down, chiefly on the ground that he was Dr. Johnson, and had always behaved like a boor and a bully. Of course, he sometimes said good things, and very often said commonplace things well, but it was the Bow-Wow manner, the infallible decisiveness, that silenced and

convinced, and that gained and maintained the oracular position. But if Johnson had a knack of saying with a bang that which most people knew, and of fostering neatness of phrase, he must have stifled thousands of thoughts better than his own. In his neighborhood shy ideas could not steal out and graze. The click of his jaws was death to them. If dear Goldy had been permitted to let his thoughts run free, and to launch his stammering fancies for what they were worth, we should have had a hundred quaint and whimsical suggestions instead of so many judicial and obvious pronouncements.

Johnson was typical of the talkers of his time: he sat as a Chairman or Speaker; he never made the talk circulate, as the bottle; he kept it in his own right hand. Dryden, I suppose, was a little in the same line at Will's, and Ben Jonson at the Mermaid. Sydney Smith and Macaulay usurped equal power at the tables where they dined. Hardly one of the talkers or tale-tellers seems to have aimed at being agreeable: they aimed only at being impressive. Whenever two of the talkers met at the same table, there was danger of an unedifying encounter, not so much of wits as of tempers. Conversation, as it went then, was rather like a goose — an awkward bird, not big enough for two. Whichever of the talkers got hold of it picked it bare. People went to hear Macaulay talk, pretty much as they went to see Macready act, or to hear Wilberforce preach: the exhibition was quite a one-man show; they never expected to get a word in.

The truth is, to be a great talker, you must be a self-worshiper. You must be curiously deficient in sympathy; you must have the forehead of an ox, and the elbows of a woman at a sale. You must have no sense of, or no care for, the privilege or the feelings of others. You must even condescend to the arts of the actor and the clown. You must prepare your points, rehearse your stories, arrange

your comic effects. You must, now and then, secure a confederate to seize opportunities or to make them, to lead up to your impromptus, perhaps to be the butt of your horse-play.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, in the early issues of *Who's Who*, defined his recreation as "showing off." And beyond all doubt Mr. Shaw does delight in astounding and confusing slow wits; but that which he does he does partly out of genial mischief, partly out of sleepless morality; and he advertises himself far less than the cause that he has in hand.

But the talker is a selfish shower-off. He seeks to advance nothing but his own glory; he considers nothing but himself; he will betray a secret for a grin, and sacrifice a friendship for a guffaw. His jokes hurt, and are meant to hurt. Think of the good things of Douglas Jerrold: they were knouts; there was a stain of blood at the end of their thongs. Oscar Wilde was not habitually cruel, but he had a tongue with a tang. He had to be smart, whoever smarted. Whistler wielded a savage club, and had an instinct for the raw. There was a bit of goat even in Charles Lamb. Very few of our wits have been good Samaritans; generally, when they found a wound, it was pepper and vinegar that they poured in. Coleridge almost alone seems to have talked without rivalry and without malice; men and women indeed, were little things that hardly came under his eye. But how pitiless was his talk all the same! At their first meeting he gave De Quincey three hours of almost unbroken monologue. He was like his own albatross — never to be shaken off.

We remember Charles Lamb's story: how, going to the India House, and being collared by Coleridge, he could escape only by cutting off a button and leaving it in the talker's hand; and how, at the end of his day's work, he found the sage still holding the floor, and buttonholing the

button; but we don't believe that anyone ever got rid of the monologuist as easily as that. The boy in Pickwick, who secured the tight gold chain by butting in with his head, alone had realized a short method with eloquent talkers.

I don't know when professional talking went out — probably with professional dining-out. No longer, I think, smart men — mostly bachelors — talk for their suppers or their dinners. The "talker" of our grandfathers' days is the bore of to-day. If ever a guest lets himself go on the talk and consumes it, he is a marked man — marked for exclusion and not for welcome. "Don't ask that chap again, my dear," the husband is apt to say; "he gorges himself with the talk like a big snake."

We call our Coleridges and Macaulays almost indifferently conversationalists and talkers, but the conversationalist is in truth almost the antithesis of the talker. The conversationalist is the man or the woman who manages the talk like a teapot, blending, sweetening, making it go round. He (or more probably she) takes care that nobody is left out. She appeals by a look or a word to the shy listener, and draws him in. She is watchful that nobody shall collar the conversation. She remembers everybody's hobby and gives it a chance for a little trot. She is on her guard against dangerous topics, and tempers politics to the shorn lamb. She charms the heat out of a burning subject by a little laugh, a little aside of sympathy. She sucks the poison out of repartee. She makes the air kindly. The guests get to know one another. In her genial warmth the black silent kettles begin to hum and sing. She mixes her company like a salad: the sours and sweets of temper are blended and taught to support and quicken one another's flavor. The dullest creature goes away chuckling over some good thing he has said.

Such things the lady of the house achieved. Does she achieve them to-day?

To me it seems that most of the social graces are dying out. The hostess is nearly extinct. We have no longer with us the exquisite persuasive art that made and maintained a salon.

The woman of to-day is too often a first-rate fighting man. She hardly studies the art of pleasing. Her talk is very largely contradiction. She cannot disagree with you delightfully; difference of opinion is defiance, not a caress. Women have lost the modulation of their voices. They do not glide into a conversation like a murmuring brook; they play football with it; their coming in is kicking off. When they renounced their whispering skirt they put off their art of insinuation. They have lost the touch that guides and inspires conversation.

To-day I find it almost impossible to meet with a good talk — a gentle, all-round conversation, where each gives his best and draws out the best of others.

You may hear — not very often — good things said; you may hear subjects ably handled. There is none of the deference, the geniality, the pervasive sympathy, that make society.

Yes, conversation is almost dead. People contradict, interrupt, grab the talk; obtrude their own interests; are angular, awkward, external. Things are shoved in, not introduced with a delicate appeal and a delightful acquiescence. The air is too rough to foster style, in manner or in phrase. Politeness is old-fashioned, breeding is out-of-date.

Johnson had made his mind up about everything. How that eternal readiness of decision was held to favor "good talk" it is hard to conceive. The really good talker is one to whose mind you have the entrée, who welcomes you to his doubts and indecisions, who permits you to share the chase of truth, whether it is run down or gets away. The good talker carries with him the best part of all the minds about him. He may once in a way indulge the humor of the

debating society; he may divide the company into Government and Opposition, and the talk into sharp-cut *Ayes* and *Noes*, but more frequently it is not judgment but deliberation that he elicits. His traffic is far more with the feelings than with the verbal decisions. You know at the end of the evening that people have felt well, not that they have said well. You may carry away here and there a phrase or an epigram, but the chief memory is a sense of beautiful partnership, of an exquisite fusion of spirits. For once the proprietary walls have shrunk away, and you have attained to the freedom of your brothers' souls. Always we know people are around us, awaiting and welcoming discovery, but nearly always we rap at a barred door; we have not the touch that sheds the spirit before and entices the other spirit forth. Too often we are prisoners pacing together the appointed round, looking one on the other with sad and longing eyes, but forbidden to break the silence. Often we settle down to an apathy of resignation, feeling that we meet but never mingle, unrebellious against our doom of isolation, persuaded that a bow and a formal smile are the limits of our communication; that our home is among the frozen seas; that the things worth saying cannot be said.

Ordinary talk only emphasizes our sad individuality; we are birds whose cages hang within call; we can utter our twitter or cry; we can make it known that we long for liberty, but we can do little more.

What joy and healing it is when one day, in a train, at a theatre, in a drawing-room, at a club, a soul looks at us with comprehending and revealing eyes! Half a lifetime, perhaps, we have sat by another soul, sharing its outward being, its amusements, its cares and duties, but we have remained two separate establishments, incapable of amalgamation, enclosed by our party walls. And now ten minutes have compassed what twenty years could not achieve:

a word or a look has drawn us into the intimacy of this new soul. We tell it, instinctively, things that we have never told, things that we meant never to tell. Thoughts that we had kept as obsolete tokens, never to be exchanged, are golden currency now. Our spirits pass in and out as though nothing kept us apart; we blow together like the breeze in a garden of spice. The thinness of the partition between our individualities, the almost identity of us who call ourselves two, is the thought that gathers us now. In a little time we feel no thought will need to be passed on. It will come to us, a strain of music to two sleeping in the same room; it will be the sharing by two blooms on the same bush of the warmth and blessing of the sun.

The finding of sympathy like this, natural, inevitable, makes us impatient of our little separate houses — our proprietary bathing boxes. Our separateness seems to us something that has grown, something that was not at first. It needs only a touch of the eternal to draw us so close to the windows of our souls that we could dwell almost in commonalty, citizens of one another, citizens of this world and the next, basking in a light that radiates from us all and from something that is more than we, that throws us back on one another, that catches us up and passes us on; that receives us, but never lets us go.

THE ADVANTAGE OF NOT BEING EDUCATED

THOMAS L. MASSON

Even for minds naturally distinguished for courage, capacity, and persistence, it is a laborious process to acquire an education. The result is highly esteemed by the majority. Certainly nobody would go through so much trouble without the conviction that a corresponding benefit has been achieved. No one has thought to question the value of an education. Perhaps the strongest point in its favor is the popular delusion that it is necessary in order to acquire a good living.

In addition to giving one an increased earning-power, an education is believed to contribute to the sum total of one's happiness. Educated people are declared to derive much benefit and satisfaction from the use of their equipment. Education not only enables them to maintain themselves, but to pass their time profitably in uplifting intellectual pastimes.

At one time I acquired an obstinate ambition to get an education and strove earnestly for this object. Later, however, I became so much interested in other matters that I gradually relinquished my hope. The natural shame that I felt over my defect was gradually replaced by a feeling of proper humility, which shaded itself into a settled tranquillity in the relinquishment of something that I have come to realize is much more unimportant than it seems.

For one thing, ignorance is a great power in itself. There is no argument with an ignorant person. You cannot get at him. His very blindness fortifies him against any advance. The divine serenity of ignorance is a fundamental fact.

Educated people are obliged to cultivate their memories in order to retain what they have gained. Thus they acquire a reputation for their stock of learning, which is likely at any moment to be upset by someone who knows a little more. If they associate with people who know less, this tends to make them deteriorate. If they associate with those who know more, they are at a constant disadvantage.

When I gave up the idea of being educated, I thought I would just become cultured and let it go at that. But being cultured is a great strain. One must always maintain one's pose. To relax into an unwitting vulgarity is fatal. One misstep will undo the work of years.

I remember distinctly the shock I had when I was one day accused of not being educated. Up to that moment I had fondly believed that I was. When I finally faced the situation and discovered that I was not, I determined to make the best of it. Since then I have had no trouble.

All my life I have been surrounded by educated people. They no longer disturb me. Indeed I find them very useful. They are quite essential to my purpose. I have but shamelessly to confess my ignorance and they flock to help me. It was at first hard to do this but now it is second nature. Generally, when you want people to perform any service for you, some sort of payment is exacted. But this is not true in the case of educated people, for the reason that the pride they take in showing you that they know more than you do inspires them to the fullest accomplishment. They will work like mad to outrival one another in your esteem — and this, strange to say, no matter how ignorant you are in their eyes. The other day I saw something in French that interested me — I can scarcely tell why. I caught a strange-looking word here and there, among a mess of others, that appealed to my primitive curiosity. I shamelessly bared my ignorance and a dozen or more immediately sprang to the rescue. It appeared to me as if everyone I

knew had an intimate acquaintance with French. In a short time they laid before me the combined result and I got what I wanted merely for the asking. Knowing that I frankly had nothing to parade, their incipient contempt for me had given way to that delightful sympathy for the under dog which appears to be inherent in every human breast.

Once I essayed to read the newspapers with some diligence, thereby spending much needless time. I do so no longer. I have taken on a few friends who pride themselves upon their knowledge of world affairs. They not only tell me everything freely, but if anyone among them inadvertently makes a misstatement, this is shortly corrected by another. My memory is naturally poor, but this is easily remedied by the fact that my friends voluntarily combine to drum into me the essentials. I sit still and press the pride of their intentions, and they do the rest.

Educated people, being in constant competition, are constantly striving to acquire more education. My heart goes out to them. Poor souls, they never read for pleasure, but for profit. But the only profit they really get is the fear that someone else may know more than they do.

Having slowly, but I believe successfully, gotten rid of this absurd feeling, I have all the time in the world. Everybody is working for me. Having nothing else to do, I can do exactly as I please. It releases the time to think — time that other people are furiously burning up in order to acquire or keep their educations.

The pleasure I get out of reading is something incalculable, because, having no reputation to sustain and no information to gather, I read only for pleasure. As soon as any author fails to interest me, I drop him. I can skip him at any point. If I don't like the way he writes, but want to know how the book comes out, I have but to signal to some educated friend who has read him, and he takes

infinite pleasure in telling me the plot. Furthermore, I do not even have to depend upon myself to make the effort to provide interesting things to read. I go over the list of educated friends I know and select those who are most capable of providing me with what I want. They have nothing to gain. They fully realize that I am utterly hopeless. Yet they take an intense interest in my wretched condition. And they never bore me. My very incapacity to follow them beyond a certain point — the point of my own interest — always stops them in time.

As for the strictly practical part, that of course is important. It is universally assumed that an education is essential in order to make a living, but I do not find it so. Here other people — as in literary matters — are constantly on hand to pull me through. I am almost ashamed at times to see them labor so hard over me. But they seem to enjoy it. I should be churlish to begrudge them this one comfort. I have slowly acquired a profession that supports me admirably, enabling me to wear clothes and absorb real food, the work being done by others. My mistakes are continuous and disgraceful, but the educated experts at hand correct them almost instantly, and always shield me from the consequences. They know how little I know, but they dig trenches around me to keep others from finding it out. If any outsider inadvertently finds it out, he immediately joins the home guard. I am abominably careless, but someone sorts my papers. I once wrote letters, but they were so bad that others took pity on me. Even my mail is now repeated to me by a beautiful woman with a cultivated voice, who never mispronounces. That is, she says she does n't, and I am ready to believe anything she says. I know nothing about a motor, except to turn on the switch and start it and move the handle back and forth so that the thing will carry me about. Yet if it stops anywhere, or the tires deflate — I believe that is the

term I have heard used — I have but to confess my ignorance to passing strangers and they work like fury to get me going again. Suppose I should try to impress them with the fact that I knew something? They would scorn me.

I account for my moderate but quite sufficient success, by the fact that, not being educated, I have no prejudices. I tolerate everyone, because anyone at any moment may save me from some hideous fate. And they always do. I must say for them that in this respect educated people are reliable. There are so many of them that what one lacks the other supplies. Also, there is no danger of being found out, because they all know already just what I am. I have absolutely nothing to conceal.

Then again, the leisure I obtain from not being educated enables me to be fairly agreeable. The only real truth I have been able to gather from all my lack of education is that if you are fairly agreeable, people like to work for you. They seem somehow to feel that it is essential that you should be maintained.

Even this article was inspired by an educated man who told me one day that he had been on the verge of advising me to acquire an education, until upon reflection he suddenly sensed my little game. I am puzzled that, being educated, he should have made this simple discovery. But then, educated people are occasionally intelligent.

ON WEARING A FUR-LINED COAT

ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH

A FRIEND of mine — one of those people who talk about money with an air of familiarity that suggests that they have got an outcrop of the Rand reef in their back gardens — said to me the other day that I ought to buy a fur-lined coat. There never was such a time as this for buying a fur-lined coat or a sealskin jacket, said he. What with the war, and the "sales," and the tradesmen's need of cash, they were simply being thrown at you. You could have them almost for the trouble of carrying them away. A trifle of fifteen or twenty pounds would buy one a coat that would be cheap at sixty guineas. And, remember, there was wear for twenty years in it. And think of the saving in doctor's bills — for you simply can't catch colds if you wear a fur coat. In short, not to buy a fur coat at this moment was an act of gross improvidence, a wrong to one's family, a — a — . And then he looked, with the cold disapproval of a connoisseur, at the coat I was wearing. And in the light of that glance I saw for the first time that it was — yes — certainly, it was not what it had been.

Now I am not going to pretend that I have a soul above fur-lined coats. I have n't; I love them. And by fur coats I don't mean those adorned with astrakhan collars, which I abominate. A man with an astrakhan coat is to me a suspicious character, a stage baron, one who is probably deep in treasons, stratagems, and spoils. The suspicion is unjust to the gentleman in the astrakhan coat, of course. Most suspicions are unjust. And if you ask me to give reasons for this unreasoning hostility to astrakhan, I do not know that I could find them. Perhaps it is the dislike

I have for artificial curls; perhaps it is that the astrakhan collar reminds me of those unhappy pet dogs who look as though they had been put in curl papers overnight and sent out into the streets by their owners as a poor jest. Yes, I think it must be that sense of artificiality which is at the root of the dislike. No doubt the curls are natural. No doubt the woolly sheep of Astrakhan do wear their coats in these little heaven-sent ringlets. But — well — "I do not love thee, Doctor Fell."

But fur-lined coats, with fine fur collars, are quite another affair. If I had the "magic nib," I could grow lyrical over them. I could, indeed. In place of this article I would write an ode to a fur-lined coat. I would sing of the Asian wilds from whence it came, of its wondrous lines and its soft and silken texture, of its generous warmth and its caressing touch. I would set up such a universal hunger for fur coats that the tradesmen in Oxford Street and Regent Street would come and offer me a guinea a word to write advertisements for them.

And yet I shall not buy a fur-lined coat, and I will tell you why. A fur coat is not an article of clothing: it is a new way of life. You cannot say with reckless prodigality, "Here, I will have a fur coat and make an end of this gnawing passion." The fur coat is not an end: it is a beginning. You have got to live up to it. You have got to take the fur-coat point of view of your relations to society. When Chauncey Depew as a boy bought a beautiful spotted dog at a fair and took it home, the rain came down and the spots began to run into stripes. He took the dog back to the man of whom he had bought it and demanded an explanation. "But you had an umbrella with that dog," said the man. "No," said the boy. "Oh!" said the man, "there's an umbrella goes with that dog."

[illegible] is with the fur-lined coat. So many things go with it. [illegible] in this respect like that grand piano to which

you succumbed in a moment of parental weakness — or after a lucky stroke in rubber. The old furniture, which had seemed so unexceptionable before, suddenly became dowdy in the presence of this princely affair. You wanted new chairs and rugs and hangings to make the piano accord with its setting. Even the house fell under suspicion, and perhaps you date all your difficulties from the day that you bought that grand piano, and found that it had set you going on a new way of life just beyond your modest means.

If I bought a fur-lined coat I know that I should want to buy a motor car to keep it company. It is possible, of course, to wear a fur coat in a motor bus, but if you do you will assuredly have a sense that you are a little overdressed, a trifle conspicuous, that the fellow passengers are mentally remarking that such a coat ought to have a carriage of its own. It would provoke the comment that I heard the other night as two ladies in evening dress left a bus in a pouring rain. "Well," said one of the other lady passengers, — a little enviously, I thought, but still pertinently, — "if I could afford to wear such fine clothes I think I would take a cab." Yes, decidedly, the fur-lined coat would not be complete without the motor car.

And then consider how it limits your freedom and raises the tariff against you. The tip that would be gratefully received if you were getting into that modest coat that you have discarded would be unworthy of the fur-lined standard that you have deliberately adopted. The recipient would take it frigidly, with a glance at the luxurious garment into which he had helped you — a glance that would cut you to the quick. Your friends would have to be fur-lined, too, and your dinners would no longer be the modest affairs of old, but would soar to the champagne standard. It would not be possible to slip unnoticed into your favorite little restaurant in Soho to take your simple

chop, or to go in quest of that wonderful restaurant of Arne's of which "Aldebaran"[1] keeps the secret. The modesty of Arne's would make you blush for your fur-lined coat.

"The genteel thing," said Tony Lumpkin's friend, "is the genteel thing at any time, if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation according-ly." That is it. The fur-lined coat is a genteel thing; but you have to be in a concatenation according-ly. And there's the rub. It is not the coat, but its trimmings, so to speak, that give us pause. When you put on the coat you insensibly put off your old way of life. You set up a new standard, and have got to adapt your comings and goings, your habits, and your expenditures, to it. I once knew a man who had a fur-lined coat presented to him. It was a disaster. He could not live in a concatenation according-ly. He lost his old friends without getting new ones. And his end — Well, his end confirmed me in the conviction of the unwisdom of wearing a fur-lined coat before you are able, or disposed, to mould your life to the fur-lined standard.

[1] The pseudonym of a friend of the author, a fellow contributor to the *Star*.

ON GOING TO BED

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

One of the characters in *The Moon and Sixpence* remarked that he had faithfully lived up to the old precept about doing every day two things you heartily dislike; for, said he, every day he had got up and he had gone to bed.

It is a sad thing that as soon as the hands of the clock have turned ten the shadow of going to bed begins to creep over the evening. We have never heard bed-going spoken of with any enthusiasm. One after another we have seen a gathering disperse, each person saying, with an air of solemn resignation: "Well, I guess I'll go to bed." But there was no hilarity about it. It is really rather touching how they cling to the departing skirts of the day that is vanishing under the spinning shadow of night.

This is odd, we repeat, for sleep is highly popular among human beings. The reluctance to go to one's couch is not at all a reluctance to slumber, for almost all of us will doze happily in an armchair or on a sofa, or even festooned on the floor with a couple of cushions. But the actual and formal yielding to sheets and blankets is to be postponed to the last possible moment.

The devil of drowsiness is at his most potent, we find, about 10.30 P.M. At this period the human carcass seems to consider that it has finished its cycle, which began with so much courage about sixteen hours before. It begins to slack and the mind halts on a dead centre every now and then, refusing to complete the revolution. Now there are those who hold that this is certainly the seemly and appointed time to go to bed and they do so as a matter of routine.

These are, commonly, the happier creatures, for they take the tide of sleep at the flood and are borne calmly and with gracious gentleness out to the great waters of nothingness. They push off from the wharf on a tranquil current, and nothing more is to be seen or heard of these voyagers until they reappear at the breakfast table, digging lustily into the grapefruit.

These people are happy, aye, in a brutish and sedentary fashion, but they miss the admirable adventures of those more embittered wrestlers who will not give in without a struggle. These latter suffer severe pangs between 10.30 and about 11.15, while they grapple with their fading faculties and seek to reëstablish the will on its tottering throne.

This requires stout valor unbending. Once you yield — be it ever so little — to the tempter, you are lost. And here our poor clay plays us false, undermining the intellect with many a trick and wile. "I will sit down for a season in that comfortable chair," the creature says to himself, "and read this sprightly novel. That will ease my mind and put me in humor for a continuance of lively thinking."

And the end of that man is a steady nasal buzz from the bottom of the chair, where he has collapsed, an unsightly object and a disgrace to humanity. This also means a big bill from the electric light company at the end of the month. In many such ways will his corpus betray him, leading him by plausible self-deceptions into a pitfall of sleep, whence he is aroused about 3 A.M., when the planet turns over on the other side.

Only by stiff perseverance and rigid avoidance of easy chairs may the critical hour between 10.30 and 11.30 be safely passed. Tobacco, a self-brewed pot of tea, and a browsing along the bookshelves (remain standing, and do not sit down with your book) are helps in this time of struggle. Even so, there are some happily drowsy souls

who can never cross these shallows alone without grounding on the Lotus Reefs.

Our friend J—— K——, magnificent creature, was so potently hypnophil that even erect and determined at his bookcase and urgently bent upon Brann's *Iconoclast*, or some other literary irritant, sleep would seep through his pores and he would fall with a crash, lying there in unconscious bliss until someone came in and prodded him up, reeling and ashamed.

But, as we started to say, those who survive this drastic weeding out which Night imposes upon her wooers — so as to cull and choose only the truly meritorious lovers — experience supreme delights which are unknown to their snoring fellows. When the struggle with somnolence has been fought out and won, when the world is all-covering darkness and close-pressing silence, when the tobacco suddenly takes on fresh vigor and fragrance, and the books lie strewn about the table, then it seems as though all the rubbish and floating matter of the day's thoughts have poured away and only the bright, clear, and swift current of the mind itself remains, flowing happily and without impediment.

This perfection of existence is not to be reached very often; but when approached it may be won. It is a different mind that one uncovers then, a spirit which is lucid and hopeful, to which — for a few serene hours — time exists not. The friable resolutions of the day are brought out again, and recemented, and chiseled anew. Surprising schemes are started and carried through to happy conclusion. Lifetimes of amazement are lived in a few passing ticks.

There is one who at such moments resolves, with complete sincerity, to start at one end of the top shelf and read again all the books in his library, intending this time really to extract their true marrow. He takes a clean sheet of

paper and sets down memoranda of all the people he intends to write to, and all the plumbers and whatnot he will call up the next day. And the next time this happy seizure attacks him he will go through the same gestures again without surprise and without the slightest mortification. And then, having lived a generation of good works since midnight struck, he summons all his resolution, and — goes to bed.

ON DROPPING ANCHOR

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE best noise in all the world is the rattle of the anchor chain when one comes into harbor at last, and lets it go over the bows.

You may say that one does nothing of the sort, that one picks up moorings, and that letting go so heavy a thing as an anchor is no business for you and me. If you say that, you are wrong. Men go from inhabited place to inhabited place, and for pleasure from station to station, then pick up moorings as best they can, usually craning over the side and grabbing as they pass, and cursing the man astern for leaving such way on her and for passing so wide. Yes, I know that. You are not the only man who has picked up moorings. Not by many, many thousands. Many moorings have I picked up in many places, none without some sort of misfortune; therefore do I still prefer the rattle of the anchor chain.

Once — to be accurate, seventeen years ago — I had been out all night by myself in a boat called the Silver Star. She was a very small boat. She had only one sail; she was black inside and out, and I think about one hundred years old. I had hired her of a poor man, and she was his only possession.

It was a rough night in the late summer, when the rich are compelled in their detestable grind to go to the Solent. When I say it was night I mean it was the early morning, just late enough for the rich to be asleep aboard their boats; and the dawn was silent upon the sea. There was a strong tide running up the Medina. I was tired to death. I had passed the Royal Squadron grounds, and the first

thing I saw was a very fine and noble buoy, new-painted, gay, lordly — moorings worthy of a man!

I let go the halyard very briskly, and I nipped forward and got my hand upon that great buoy — there was no hauling of it in-board; I took the little painter of my boat and made it fast to this noble buoy, and then immediately I fell asleep. In this sleep of mine I heard, as in a pleasant dream, the exact motion of many oars rowed by strong men; and very soon afterwards I heard a voice with a Colonial accent swearing in an abominable manner; and I woke up and looked — and there was a man of prodigious wealth, all dressed in white, and with an extremely new cap on his head. His whiskers also were white and his face bright red, and he was in a great passion. He was evidently the owner or master of the buoy, and on either side of the fine boat in which he rowed were the rowers, his slaves. He could not conceive why I had tied the Silver Star to his magnificent great imperial moorings, to which he had decided to tie his own expensive ship, on which, no doubt, a dozen as rich as he were sailing the seas.

I told him that I was sorry I had picked up his moorings, but that, in this country, it was the common courtesy of the sea to pick up any spare moorings one could find. I also asked him the name of his expensive ship, but he only answered with curses. I told him the name of my ship was the Silver Star.

Then, when I had cast off, I put out the sweeps and I rowed gently, for it was now slack water at the top of the tide, and I stood by while he tied his magnificent yacht to the moorings. When he had done that I rowed under the stern of that ship and read her name. But I will not print it here; only let me tell you it was the name of a ship belonging to a fabulously rich man. Riches, I thought then and I think still, corrupt the heart.

Upon another occasion I came with one companion across the bar of Orford River, out of a very heavy wind outside and a very heavy sea. I just touched as I crossed that bar, though I was on the top of the highest tide of the year, for it was just this time in September, the highest springs of the hunter's moon.

My companion and I sailed up Orford River, and when we came to Orford Town we saw a buoy, and I said to my companion, "Let us pick up moorings."

Upon the bank of the river was a long line of men, all shouting and howling, and warning us not to touch that buoy. But we called out to them that we meant no harm. We only meant to pick up those moorings for a moment, so as to make everything snug on board, and that then we would take a line ashore and lie close to the wharf. Only the more did those numerous men (whom many others ran up to join as I called) forbid us with oaths to touch the buoy. Nevertheless, we picked up the little buoy, which was quite small and light, and we got it in-board, and held on, waiting for our boat to swing to it. But an astonishing thing happened! The boat paid no attention to the moorings, but went careering up-river, carrying the buoy with it, and apparently dragging the moorings along the bottom without the least difficulty. And this was no wonder, for we found out afterward that the little buoy had only been set there to mark a racing-point, and that the weights holding the line of it to the bottom were very light and few. So it was no wonder the men of Orford had been so angry. Soon it was dark, and we replaced the buoy stealthily, and when we came in to eat at the Inn we were not recognized.

It was on this occasion that was written the song: —

The men that lived in Orford stood
Upon the shore to meet me;
Their faces were like carven wood,
They did not wish to greet me. . . .

It has eighteen verses.

I say again, unless you have moorings of your own — an extravagant habit — picking up moorings is always a perilous and doubtful thing, fraught with accident and hatred and mischance. Give me the rattle of the anchor chain!

I love to consider a place I have never yet seen, but which I shall reach at last, full of repose, marking the end of those voyages, and security from the trouble of the sea.

This place will be a cove set round with high hills on which there shall be no house or sign of men, and it shall be enfolded by quite deserted land; but the westering sun will shine pleasantly upon it under a warm air. It will be a proper place for sleep.

The fairway into that haven shall lie behind a pleasant little beach of shingle, which shall run out aslant into the sea from the steep hillside, and shall be a breakwater made by God. The tide shall run up behind it smoothly, and in a silent way, filling the quiet hollow of the hills, brimming it all up like a cup — a cup of refreshment and of quiet, a cup of ending.

Then with what pleasure shall I put my small boat round, just round the point of that shingle beach, noting the shoal water by the eddies and the deeps by the blue color of them where the channel runs from the main into the fairway. Up that fairway shall I go, up into the cove, and the gates of it shall shut behind me, headland against headland, so that I shall not see the open sea any more, though I shall still hear its distant noise. But all around me, save for that distant echo of the surf from the high hills, will be silence; and the evening will be gathering already.

Under that falling light, all alone in such a place, I shall let go the anchor chain, and let it rattle for the last time. My anchor will go down into the clear salt water with a

run, and when it touches I shall pay out four lengths or more so that she may swing easily and not drag, and then I shall tie up my canvas and fasten all for the night, and get me ready for sleep. And that will be the end of my sailing.

A GROUP OF BOOK REVIEWS
from the
Atlantic's Bookshelf

"The Ladies!" A Shining Constellation of Wit and Beauty, by E. Barrington. Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press. 1922. 12mo. x+268 pp. $3.50.

SUPPOSE Mrs. Samuel Pepys to have learned shorthand and to have read her husband's diary: what would have been her feelings as she scanned the racier passages and perhaps succeeded in making out certain entries that no editor has yet ventured to print? Or suppose the madly eccentric Edward Wortley Montagu the younger and his arrant hussy of a wife to have completely outwitted Lady Mary and then stolen her jewels, including the "Turkish clasp with emeralds": might not chagrin explain her mysterious departure from England in 1739? Suppose Stella and Vanessa to have met: what would have happened? Then consider the beautiful Gunnings, especially Elizabeth, who became Duchess of Hamilton: is Horace Walpole to be believed, or can some version of the marriage be imagined that will permit the fair Elizabeth to seem not unworthy of her rank and beauty? Or turn to "Little Burney," author of *Evelina* and favorite of Dr. Johnson: owing — Macaulay says — to her father's inordinate respect for royalty, she is condemned to a period of attendance upon Queen Charlotte which amounts to degradation and imprisonment. Is this really the whole story? Is Macaulay right about Madame Schwellenberg and Colonel Digby and all the rest of it, or did eyewitnesses see events in another light?

These are hard nuts to crack — impossible, in a way. That is, they can't be smashed by proof and footnotes and the heavy artillery of the antiquarian. They are puzzles about which one man's guess is almost as good as another's — though not so good as a clever woman's.

E. Barrington, fortunately, has been wondering about these and kindred matters, and the result is a charming and admirably made book which, although it neither proves anything nor tries to prove anything, does offer us in each case a perfectly satisfactory substitute for the truth. There are doubtless other possibilities — here is E. Barrington's, always in character with time, place, and person, always vivid and sympathetic.

This is saying far more than that these chapters succeed in getting back into the eighteenth century and clothing their characters in something near enough to the speech, manners, and dress of the period to be directly effective across the footlights. E. Barrington does better than merely to produce a successful "period" book: her scene between Stella and Vanessa, for example, is no more a mere "period stunt" than is the momentous interview in *The Egoist* between Clara Middleton and Lætitia Dale. And although these chapters usually centre in some crucial and intensely dramatic moment, the lighter side is by no means lacking. There is capital Irish fun, for a single instance, on the page where Elizabeth Gunning finds it necessary to communicate by signals with the future Countess of Coventry.

If we may attach a pedagogic moral to this delightful book, we beg to urge that this kind of thing, which is really a very severe test of knowledge, be oftener tried in college and in school. Many a young person whose imagination sleeps through the usual "theme" might become excited and informed over problems such as these. But of course it must always be remembered that E. Barringtons do not grow on huckleberry bushes.

Chester Noyes Greenough.

The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle, by Hugh Lofting. Illustrated by the author. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1922. 12mo. xiv+364 pp. $2.50.

Not since Lewis Carroll continued Alice's Adventures in Wonderland through the Looking-Glass, has an author responded to an encore more successfully than Hugh Lofting in his second volume of the biography of Doctor Dolittle. The sterling qualities of the Kindly One, as the good doctor is dubbed by the discriminating Popsipetels, shine undimmed through the adventurous pages of the Voyages. The fresh and the familiar invest this happy sequel with a blended charm. Polynesia the parrot is here, with all her old flair for leadership; faithful Jip, with his gold collar and his capacity for meeting an emergency; Dab Dab, the perfect duck of a housekeeper, and the African prince, Bumpo, now matriculated at Oxford where he likes Cicero — "Yes, I think Cicero's fine — so simultaneous. By the way, they tell me his son is rowing for our college next year — charming fellow." And there are even more new friends than old: Long Arrow, and Jabrizi, the Beetle, all the Men of the Moving Land, and last but not least the Great Glass Sea-Snail.

In the earlier book, the doctor's humanitarian impulses are in the ascendant — the vaccination of monkeys may surely be called humanitarian by courtesy. In the Voyages, his preoccupations are linguistic and philological, and his methods of passionate research into the sources of the shellfish language are interpreted for us by his ardent disciple, Tommy Stubbins, the nine-and-one-half-year-old son of the Puddleby cobbler. With Tommy we study the meagre vocabulary of the rare and solitary Wiff-Waff, and the hybrid soliloquies of the Silver Fidgit who learned his English during an enforced sojourn in a public aquarium.

But the adventures of this twentieth-century descendant

of Sir John Mandeville and Baron Munchausen are not all in research. If Darwin, on the Voyage of the Beagle, had discovered Spidermonkey Island and played the Promethean rôle to the fireless Popsipetels, who can say what the effect might have been upon his scientific temperament? For the central adventure, toward which the others mount, occurs, modern fashion, in the heart of Doctor Dolittle, where the scholar and the utopist-administrator come to grips, and he makes his great decision, laying the wooden crown of the Popsipetels upon the beach of Spidermonkey Island, to "tiptoe incognito" back to the comparative seclusion of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh.

FLORENCE CONVERSE.

Memories of a Hostess, a Chronicle of Eminent Friendships, Drawn Chiefly from the Diaries of Mrs. James T. Fields, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe. Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press. 1922. 12mo. viii+312 pp. $4.00.

WHEN we take up a biographical presentation of a brilliant man or a charming woman, two convictions are usually present in our minds: one, that there will be passages that will give us what we want; second, that we shall have to pay for our pleasure by going through long informational stretches, too exhaustively instructive. Mr. Howe's presentation of Mrs. Fields is absolutely an exception. Here the frosting is sufficient to the cake; the whole book is the cream of the story. Out of Mrs. Fields's diaries he has taken only the high spots, or perhaps she chronicled only the high spots; it would be like her. She had a great sense of values — of lasting values. She knew in 1862 who would matter in 1922.

What Mr. Howe has done, in effect, is to reconstruct the scene, by a few unobtrusive but telling touches, and let his lady speak for herself. I feel sure that she would like her

diary handled in this way — made into a book recording only golden hours; like a Russian novel, with the dull descriptions and heavy reflections left out — simply not there. The result is that the book has something the quality of a novel; it is a presentation of living people — and such people! — not an encyclopædia of biography. One sits down at a dinner given for Dickens in the dining-room at 148 Charles Street; the guests are Agassiz, Emerson, Judge Hoar, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Greene, Charles Eliot Norton, Longfellow. They leave the table "in a tempest of laughter," and Dickens hurries off to give one of his readings. Such a dinner! And after it, no penance, no information, none! We simply go to another dinner-party that Dickens gives at the Parker House for his Boston friends. Or, we can go over through a snowstorm in the afternoon with Mrs. Fields, "at Mr. Dickens's kind request," to see that the flowers are properly arranged and that the management has neglected nothing about the appointments of the table.

Edwin Booth comes in for tea just as twilight is falling and "a magnificent red and purple and gold sunset is staining the Bay," and a full moon is beginning to shed its light over the river and the schooners anchored off-shore. To those who knew the long drawing-room at 148 Charles Street, that magically haunted room, the scene comes with poignant vividness. In no book have I heard Booth talk so much or so well as he does that afternoon at tea; nor have I read anything that makes him seem at once so human and so mysterious. Where can one find such gatherings of brilliant friends to-day, when the gifted are so singularly, so intentionally, graceless? These people had time for amenities, for friendship; to taste the flavor of life, and to enjoy what was rare in each other.

The Journal moves from Boston to Manchester-by-the-Sea and back, with the seasons, as Mrs. Fields herself

moved. There is one lovely passage written at Manchester. It is a perfect summer day. Mr. Fields does not go up to town but stays at home with a bag full of MSS. He and his wife go to a favorite spot in a pasture by the sea, and she reads him a new story that has just come in from Henry James, Jr., the promising young son of an old friend — "Compagnons de Voyage," in "execrable" handwriting. They find the quality good. "I do not know," she says, "why success in work should affect one so powerfully, but I could have wept as I finished reading, not from the sweet, low pathos of the tale, but from the knowledge of the writer's success. It is so difficult to do anything well in this mysterious world."

Yes, one says to one's self, that is Mrs. Fields, at her best. She rose to meet a fine performance, a splendid achievement, always — to the end. At eighty she could still entertain new people, new ideas, new forms of art. And she brought to her greeting of the new all the richness of her rich past: a long, unbroken chain of splendid contacts, beautiful friendships. Even Bergson, I remember, so foreign to the Augustan tradition, looked about that long drawing-room with thoughtful pleasure in his keen eyes when someone told him that Thackeray had worked for a longish time in this house, and used to have his tea here by the fire.

WILLA CATHER.

All in a Life-Time, by Henry Morgenthau, in Collaboration with French Strother. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1922. 8vo. xii+454 pp. $4.00.

IN 1865, when Henry Morgenthau was nine years old, he accompanied his family from Mannheim, Germany, to New York. His father, who had been a prosperous cigar-manufacturer, employing as many as a thousand hands, had seen his business ruined by an increase in the American

tariff on tobacco which had closed his chief market against him; thereupon he brought his family to the land that had dealt him this cruel blow. In the public schools of New York the boy applied himself diligently to his studies and showed marked brilliancy in mathematics. At the age of fourteen he entered City College, but after a few months had to withdraw in order to go to work and contribute what he could to the support of the family. A few years later he worked his way through Columbia Law School and within a short time after his graduation he was prospering amazingly. Buying and selling real estate, he had such success that eventually he decided to give up the practice of the law and form a real estate trust company, which should do for real estate what the banking institutions had done for the railroads and industrials. The most important financiers in New York joined with him in this enterprise — though Mr. Morgenthau says that he had to go "on bended knees" to have some of them accept what seemed to him tremendous profits.

Had he nothing but the tale of his business success to relate, his story, though romantic and in its way stimulating, would have had no very great importance. He was absorbed for many years in making money; the absorption was that of a keen player of the game. But his sense of civic responsibility was never wholly dormant, and it became more active as his years and wealth increased. Not until 1912, however, did he take an active part in political affairs. In the presidential campaign of that year he was one of Mr. Wilson's most ardent supporters, and as Chairman of the Democratic Finance Committee he contributed in no inconsiderable measure to the success of the party ticket. During Mr. Wilson's two administrations he rendered valuable public service in various capacities — as Ambassador to Turkey; as a member of the Committee to finance the Red Cross; as a special government agent to

Europe during the war; as a delegate to the International League of Red Cross Societies; as a member of the Commission to investigate the Jewish massacres in Poland.

A striking illustration of the soundness of his judgment is afforded in the account of a talk that he had with Venizelos during the Peace Conference. He told the Greek statesman that the invasion of Smyrna was a mistake, that the Turks would drive the Greek troops back into the hinterland and fight until they exhausted them. The reply of Venizelos was, "Perhaps we have acted too hastily; it may have been unwise for us to send an army into Smyrna, but now that the army is there, it would be more unwise to withdraw it."

Mr. Morgenthau's autobiography is the story of an upright and upstanding man whose idealism is properly ballasted and who has guarded well the important interests entrusted to him and performed well the important duties assigned to him. There is nothing vainglorious in his narrative; it is modest, simple, and direct. He has a talent for crisp and vivid characterization; he comments freely upon the distinguished persons with whom he has had relations; some of his anecdotes — as those about Mr. Bryan and Mr. Henry Ford — will be less relished by the subjects of them than by other readers. The book is both entertaining and enlightening.

ARTHUR STANWOOD PIER.

The American Party System: an Introduction to the Study of Political Parties in the United States, by Charles Edward Merriam. New York: The Macmillan Co. 8vo, x+439 pp. $3.00.

READERS of the *Atlantic Monthly* who are familiar with the career of Charles E. Merriam, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, will recognize his fitness to write of the American party system. A sound

and enlightened scholar, who has embodied the results of his studies in several books treating of political theory, familiar with the working of the party system in England and on the Continent, he writes with the advantage of a man who has also had practical experience with politics in Chicago; he was for six years a member of the City Council and was the Republican candidate for mayor in 1911. In consequence, the volume at hand, although Professor Merriam calls it an "Introduction to the Study of Political Parties in the United States," and insists that his method is that of "objective analysis," has the flavor of humanized scholarship that distinguished the writings of the late Lord Bryce.

The first chapters, on the composition and organization of the political party, show by what means the power of party organization became greater in this country than anywhere else. The following chapters on the spoils system explain in detail the ways by which the "machine" has maintained itself in influence. These are summarized in a chart which exhibits concretely the opportunities for graft enjoyed by a local boss in a city of 100,000 inhabitants.

The chapters on the party and the selection of official personnel aim to set in proper relation the dramatic periods of nomination and election and those quieter and more prolonged intervals in which "jobs" are found for the "workers," who in turn work for the boss. Here, as in the treatment of the spoils system, the importance of administration and the loss resulting from a distrust of vigorous and effective government are set forth in moderate but convincing terms.

In this present month, with the primaries behind us and the November elections just ahead, we are in the midst of one of the spectacular periods of party activity. Perhaps our thinking on political themes, ordinarily sluggish, is somewhat quickened by the drama. If, questioning the

future of our institutions, we read Professor Merriam's concluding chapters, we shall find sober counsel that, although not blinking the dark side, bids us take courage. After all, we are our own masters; public opinion rules. The power of the boss through his control of patronage grows not stronger but weaker.

Public sentiment against the spoils system has unquestionably developed, and even more effective forces have come into play.

The last pages of Bryce's *Modern Democracies* are memorable by reason of the doubts which the author hazards as to the future of Democracy. The people, as Herbert Croly has said, are "innocent and easily diverted"; the problem is to impress upon them "the necessity of salvation." Who is there who would not be appalled at the task? Yet who would refuse to put his hand to the plough?

HENRY G. PEARSON.

The Hairy Ape; Anna Christie; The First Man, by Eugene O'Neill. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1922. 8vo. xii+322 pp. $2.00.

MR. O'NEILL'S view of life is bitter. He delights in sordid episodes. Characters portrayed are weak, irresolute, selfish, or brutal. He knows the theatre, and is skillful in arrangement of situations, with men and women true to instincts and surroundings, speaking as they should. Seldom does he err in dialogue, which usually is natural, direct, and revealing of character. In "The Emperor Jones" he portrayed terror so that it was contagious. In "Beyond the Horizon" his pathos was unaffected. His sense of grim humor is indisputable. He has the gift of flaying satire. His bitterness and hopelessness are almost unrelieved. His tragedy is without the nobility that exalts. Often he brings to mind the unhappy Strindberg. Yet there is to-day no more

commanding figure than O'Neill in the American play-house.

The stoker "Yank," in "The Hairy Ape," exults in strength and stoke-hole life. In his gutter speech he shouts to his mates — they are finely differentiated — how they rule the world. Mildred in white, curious about the boiler-room, frightened by his "abysmal brutality" and foul language, exclaims "Oh! the filthy beast!" and faints. "Yank" swears to get even with her; not as Zola's Ragu when Fernande in white ventures into the foundry; "Yank" would kill Mildred. There is no place for him in the city; even the I. W. W. reject him. At the Zoo he talks as a pal to the gorilla, frees him, and is slain by him. This powerful play is somewhat marred by repetition of phrases. Is not the ending for the *Grand Guignol!*

A play of a higher order is "Anna Christie." Mr. O'Neill was once, it is said, a seafarer, but his sea is not the sea of Melville, Whitman, Hugo, or Swinburne; it is "dat ole davil, sea," as Chris, the bargeman, keeps saying. His daughter, Anna, meeting him after long absence, is loved by the bold Burke. Loving him, she confesses her life of shame in the West. Enraged at first, he accepts it, for his rough love prevails. "Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time," says Chris, looking out in the night; "you can't see where you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea — she knows!" With this symbolic line the curtain falls.

In "The First Man," a study of male selfishness and small-town meanness, an anthropologist is going to Asia. His children died; he does not wish another to distract him and his devoted wife from research work. She longs for one and is delivered — in a daring and painful scene, off stage. The mother dies; the child lives. The father hates it. His hatred confirms outrageous suspicions. Knowing the slandering, he proudly asserts his fatherhood.

PHILIP HALE.

Last Poems, by A. E. Housman. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1922. 12mo. 79 pp. $1.50.

The finality of the title of Mr. A. E. Housman's *Last Poems* makes it possible to consider his two slender volumes as a whole. *A Shropshire Lad* has now for many years been a classic, by its grave detachment set off from transitory moods and fleeting events.

Both volumes are marked by a chiseled perfection of phrase and stanza, a beauty of line rather than of mass or color. Emotion and even passion are here in abundance, but under the restraint of an imagination that burns with a "hard gem-like flame," with little glow or heat.

The themes in *A Shropshire Lad* are few. The cool grace of a spray of flowers, the poignant realization of the transitory quality of life, the grim trickery of death, the quiet endurance of life's burden, the unforgettable flash of a face seen in a crowd — all these fleeting experiences are captured and set in quiet lyrics.

It is, perhaps, natural that *Last Poems* should have neither intensity nor variety equal in measure to *A Shropshire Lad*. Mr. Housman says, "I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which, in the early months of 1895, I wrote the greater part of my other book, nor indeed could I well sustain it if it came." There are, for instance, few such flashes of beauty as in "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now"; few such expressions of regret as "When I was one-and-twenty"; few such sharp etchings as "On moonlit heath and lonesome bank." In *Last Poems* death and "mutability" mainly furnish themes. The note of quiet pain endured without bitterness and without struggle is mellowed in this volume into a well-tempered resignation. Life must be faced, death is inevitable, there is no reason for despair.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

To this grave mood there is little of the contrast so often present in *A Shropshire Lad*. Yet in "Star and Coronal and Bell" there is the old delight in Spring's fresh beauty; in "Epithalamium" the old song of marriage joy is sung to new accents.

Two of the most effective of *Last Poems* reiterate the theme of the swift punishment which overtakes the man who cannot understand laws which conflict with his own will — "The Culprit" and "Eight o'Clock." In condensation, in compactness of phrase, in stabbing intensity of situation, "Eight o'Clock" stands beside the most effective short poems of our fertile time.

He stood, and heard the steeple
Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.
One, two, three, four, to market-place and people
It tossed them down.

Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour,
He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;
And then the clock collected in the tower
Its strength and struck.

The house of poetry has many mansions, and *Last Poems* is only a little book. Yet those who like perfection of phrase and sincerity of impression will find it a permanent abiding place.

Ralph Philip Boas.

Pieces of Hate, by Heywood Broun. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1922. 12mo. xii+227 pp. $2.00.

"In the plains and the rolling country there is room for the individual to skip and frolic, but all the peaks are preëmpted." So writes Mr. Heywood Broun, in his latest volume, *Pieces of Hate*, and thereby lays down the very precept and suggestion for his own hilarity. He skips and frolics through the plains and across the knolls of ordinary experience, swift of toe and ready-shod for frauds, whether literary, or dramatic, athletic, sociological, or domestic, and with a zest which starts suspicion in his reader's mind that, possibly, the "preëmpting" of the peaks is not such a discouragingly important matter after all.

Pieces of Hate is a volume of essays, criticisms, discussions and casual gossip about living, snatched from the flood which Mr. Broun pours steadily into the monthly and daily press. Some of its pages are trivial, many are extremely valuable, and a few are excellent. The whole volume is deliciously alive and full of chuckles. Its author is awake to the common weakness for packing away the critical toga in moth-balls when we plunge into the popular novel, or take our seats before the theatre curtain, or go about our daily concerns. He shakes out the camphor and holds to the sunlight some of the absurdities of the fabric of habitual opinion.

If that were the sum total of his service, *Pieces of Hate* would be welcome enough; but behind the whole performance there looms another matter, seldom noticed: the question of merit in those fugitive contacts which men make with life, contacts that find their sole record in the daily newspaper. Himself a newspaper man, Mr. Broun has his clan's gift of haste; and yet, though this book shares largely in the bewildering implications of speed and tumultuous life crowding the press, though it contains much

frolic and friendly laughter, there are also signposts to a discernment and meaning not commonly associated with the press.

To the inveterate and stupid tradition about the essential badness of all newspaper-writing, its shallowness, conscious falsity, and poor pretense of coming to grips with the subtleties of human affairs, a severe shock is administered by writing of the quality revealed in some of the pages of this volume. Evidently some of the fugitive writings that flit across the pages of one's newspaper may be instinct with a beauty and stung with a life well worth a longer existence than the twenty-five minutes between editions. Probably Lafcadio Hearn was not wrong, after all, when he caught his *Fantastics* into the pages of the New Orleans *Item;* nor Anatole France, when he penned his famous series for *Le Temps.*

Mr. Broun, of course, is a long way from Hearn and a longer way from M. France; but he confounds the dubious for all that. One wishes only that he would halt a bit more frequently to lay his shovel to those deeper treasures that are strewn under the plain. For fugitive beauty, even when glimpsed in a frolic, is still as tantalizing as an incomplete adventure.

JAMES H. POWERS.

One of Ours, by Willa Cather. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1922. 12mo. viii+459 pp. $2.50.

MISS CATHER'S new story is a profound and powerful epic of the Great War.

The foundation is laid in the Middle West, which Miss Cather knows so well and always depicts with such a loving touch. We see the strangely mixed and blended races, typified in vividly natural and contrasted human figures, tilling together the huge, rich, dumb, responsive

earth. Life creeps onward from day to day, repeating its old, common, monotonous comedies and tragedies, poignant to those who play in them, tame to superficial observers and meaningless.

The hero of the book is a plain American, Claude Wheeler, who does his work, ploughs and harrows, earns and spends, eats, drinks, and sleeps, with the rest. Yet he differs from the more stolid souls about him in that life puzzles and perplexes him, seems to mean nothing and to lead nowhere, yet somehow suggests vast possibilities which leave his eager, restless spirit forever unsatisfied. What does it all mean? What is it all tending to? What is the eternal use, the purpose, the profit of this great, rich, sensual, industrious, middle-western America? To what end are the powers and sensibilities that he feels stirring in himself — only to die?

He asks these questions obscurely, half-consciously, while his earnest muscles go about their daily labor and the months and years slip away. He asks — and no one answers. His stalwart, prosperous, cynical father does not answer him. His mother's remote, hidden God does not answer him. His cold, mild, persistent, unresponsive wife does not answer him.

Then the great war comes. Claude is swept into it, with a million others, is swept over the vast, strange ocean, with deaths crowding about him even there, is swept over the sunny fields of France, and dies, like so many others, the death of a hero, still with the puzzle in his heart, and in Miss Cather's heart, and in the reader's heart. But the solution suggested is in the sanctification of glory over duty done.

The sense of mystery and the sense of beauty make the charm of this latest book of Miss Cather's, as they made the charm of the lovely *April Twilights* twenty years ago. But the mystery has perhaps deepened and darkened under

the strain of life; and the feeling of beauty, if no less intense, is somewhat less permeating. And I like to turn back from Claude's heroic sacrifice to the verses which have sung so long in my memory and which make so touching an epilogue to the later book:

> So blind is life, so long at last is sleep,
> And none but Love to bid us laugh or weep,
> And none but Love,
> And none but Love.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

EARTH AND SEA

The Shrinkage of Earth

[From the *Nation* (London), March 13, 1920, by permission of the author and of the editor, Mr. J. Middleton Murray.]

Henry Wood Nevinson has had an exciting life as newspaper correspondent and traveler. He was war correspondent during the Greek Turk War, the Boer War, and the Great War; exposed the Portuguese slave-trade in central Africa; and was in Russia during the revolution of 1905–1906. He is now a member of the staff of *The Nation and The Athenæum* (London).

An incident in the day's news arouses in the author memories of his own travels in Africa, and suggests doubts concerning the future of exploration. Mr. Nevinson's style is noteworthy for simplicity and vigor. (See, also, his "Good-bye, America!" p. 203.)

The Snow Man

[From the *Nation* (New York), November 30, 1921, by permission of the author and the editors. Published anonymously.]

The essay, like the last, rises out of a bit of news, and the theme is almost complementary to that of the other. The persistence of romance in the world is a subject of endless literary possibilities, and is perhaps the one that essayists love best.

Sea Stories

[From the *Weekly Review*, August 13, 1921, by permission of the author and the editors of the *Independent*, with which the *Weekly Review* is now combined.]

Edmund Lester Pearson is an authority on libraries, and for many years conducted the department, "The Librarian," in the *Boston Transcript*, Wednesday edition. He is author of several entertaining books, among them: *The Old Librarian's Almanac*, *The Librarian at Play*, *The Voyage of the Hoppergrass*, and *The Secret Book*.

Here the theme is suggested by a book — *London River* — and is illustrated by the author's memories of other sea stories. The style is easy and "talky," like the conversation of a well read man.

"Haddon's 'Buckle'" refers to Henry Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*.

The Immortal White Whale

[From the *Athenæum* (London), February 1922, by permission of the author and the editor.]

Augustine Birrell, statesman and man of letters, is author of several books of literary essays, characteristically light-hearted and witty, but full of sound sense. Among his works are: *Obiter Dicta*, *Res Judicatæ*, and *In the Name of the Bodleian*.

The essay, which masquerades as a review of a rediscovered book of genius, is really an amusing personal confession. Aside from its interest on its own account, it makes us wish to read *Moby Dick*.

Bird Music

[From *Adventures Among Birds*, a book of essays originally published in the *English Review*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Nation*, but "rewritten and extended." By permission of the author and the publishers, E. P. Dutton and Company.]

W. H. Hudson (died 1922), naturalist and essayist, master of an exquisitely simple and natural prose style, has been called by Mr. Galsworthy the most valuable of recent writers, because his philosophy of life is greatly needed to-day. He spent his boyhood in the Argentine. His works fall into four groups: scientific (*British Birds*); nature studies (*Idle Days in Patagonia*); romances (*Green Mansions*); and reminiscence (*Far Away and Long Ago*). To read one is to wish to read more.

It would be hard to find an essay more personal. It should be read aloud to feel the full beauty and freshness of style. Notice the light and sparkle, the precision of word and phrase, the essential originality of the thought, the frank use of the first person without egotism.

White's *Natural History of Selborne* was published in 1789.

The Bee's Day

[From the *Nation* (London), February 7, 1920, by permission of the editor.]

An example of the excellent anonymous writing still published in English and American weeklies. The style will bear long study. Note that almost any observation accurately recorded in good English may be interesting. Libraries of books have been written on the life of the bee, and yet this man, by restricting his observation, manages to give a new and fresh impression of the marvel.

Thin Ice

[From *Wildwood Ways*, essay first published in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, by permission of the author and of the book publishers, Small, Maynard and Company.]

WINTHROP PACKARD has had an interesting life as journalist, soldier, Arctic explorer, and student of wild life. He is at present secretary-treasurer of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Among his many books are: *Wild Pastures*, *Woodland Paths*, *Florida Trails*, *Literary Pilgrimages of a Naturalist*, and *White Mountain Trails*.

The essay is an interesting combination of boyhood memories and close observation. The author has many original things to say about something with which everybody is familiar. The incident of the captive loon is told with restraint, but is unforgettable.

Thoreau, in *Walden*, has some interesting comments on loons.

Dead Matter in Africa

[From the *Dial* (New York), March 1921, by permission of the author and the editors.]

MR. POWYS, in a letter to me, says: "The atmosphere of the sketch was drawn from my reactions to Africa after a five years' stay as a manager of a stock farm on the shores of Lake Elmenteita. The actual incident of a stallion zebra keeping off vultures from its dead mate was seen by my brother Willie, not by me."

Knowing that he has an incident quite capable of making its own effect, the author tells it without embroidery. The result is memorable. It is an example of the sketch, rather than of the essay proper.

A "hogget" is here, apparently, a half-grown sheep. A "boma" is an inclosure.

Cats

[From the *New Statesman* (London), December 1920, and reprinted in *The Pleasures of Ignorance*. By permission of the author, the editor, and Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers of the book.]

IN this amusing exposition an animal which has been domesticated by man since before the building of the Great Pyramid is presented with entire novelty. The author manages to make many acute remarks on cat nature by simply looking with his own eyes. There is much neatness of phrasing amounting to wit.

"Sax Rohmer": The author is probably thinking of *The Green Eyes of Bast*, a fantastic novel by this maker of "thrillers."

Lappa Officinalis: var. Major

[From the *Boston Evening Transcript*, May 15, 1922, by permission of the editors and the author. The original had no title, and was signed "The Nomad," the pseudonym under which Mr. Chamberlin conducts a department in the *Transcript*.]

GRAY gives *Arctium lappa*, var. *majus:* which might be translated as "Big bear that sticks to one."

The nature essayist, like the poet, does a great work in the world by making us see common objects with new eyes. Here is a plant found in every vacant lot, detested by gardeners, and execrated by pedestrians who have to pick its burrs off their clothes; and yet, by a shift of point of view, it becomes "almost human."

Mr. Liberty H. Bailey long ago praised the burdock as a decorative foliage-plant.

ART AND LIFE

Ringing the Bells of Heaven

[From the *Nation* (London), August 21, 1920, by permission of the editor. The title, which is mine, is from Ralph Hodgson, and the quotation on p. 86 is also from his *Song of Honor*, one of the finest poems of our day.]

THE essay strikes at one of the fundamental conceptions of poetry. The ancients made a distinction between the poet as "maker" and the poet as seer or prophet. Does it seem to you that H. J. M. makes too little of the former? The main contention of the essay may be compared with that of "Folk Songs," p. 95. Do not fail to note the excellence of the writing.

A Daydream

[From the *Outlook* (New York), April 6, 1921, by permission of the author and the editors.]

DAVID MANNES, who is a professional violinist, has been director of various important musical organizations, notably of the Music School Settlement (1902–1915) in New York. He says this essay is purely imaginative. But dreams come true. "I hope," he adds, "that the little essay tells its own tale."

It is an example of the essay in narrative form, with free use of dialogue. The story is told in order to express an idea or project interestingly.

Folk Songs

[From the *Times* (London), Sunday edition, June 1920, by permission of the editor and the author.]

ERNEST NEWMAN is musical critic of the *Times*, and author of *A Musical Motley*, and other books of musical criticism.

Students who have heard of the "communal theory" of ballad-origin will be interested in this piece of skepticism.

Baseball and Artists

[*What Men Live By*, many of the chapters of which first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, is a book every young man and woman should read. By permission of the author and by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company.]

RICHARD CLARKE CABOT is a Boston physician, and author of several other books, learned or popular.

The extension of the word "art" to include all forms of making and doing, even many to which we never think of applying it, suggests new lines of thought and new subjects for writing.

Actors and Applause

[From the *Times* (London), April 1922, by permission of the editors.]

ARTHUR BINGHAM WALKLEY is dramatic critic of the *Times*, and is author of several books of essays: *Playhouse Impressions*, *Frames of Mind*, *Dramatic Criticism*, *Drama and Life*, and so forth. His writing is notable for a light and airy distinction, a wide knowledge of several literatures, and an unusual wit. — The Tolstoi reference is to *What Is Art?* Chap. XIII (and Appendix III), in which an amusing analysis of *The Ring of the Nibelungs* is given.

The First Play

[From the *Tribune* (New York), April 1922, by courtesy of the author and the editors. The author is an actor and playwright.]

AN amusing account of an almost universal experience — a good subject for any student to write on.

Drama versus Film

[From the *London Telegraph*, June 1920, by permission of the editors.]

HENRY ARTHUR JONES is a noted dramatist. Besides many plays he has written *The Renascence of the English Drama*, *The Foundations of a National Drama*, *The Theatre of Ideas*, and so forth. His optimism concerning the film may be compared with that of Mr. Vachel Lindsay in his *Art of the Moving Picture*.

Many subjects are suggested by the essay, among them: Why the moving picture has not shown the power and beauty which Mr. Jones hopes for in it.

Book Hunger

[From the *New York Times Book Review and Magazine*, April 30, 1922, by permission of the Sunday editor.]

THE identity of "A Fortunate Soldier" I do not know. Although he seems young, he has had a life of unusual experiences.

The staccato style has been much cultivated of late, but is still more common in French than in English. Victor Hugo is the great exemplar, but Charles Reade sometimes used it. What do you think of it, and of the use of the historical present? A dis-

cussion would raise several technical questions of importance. — Daniel Dravot appears in Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King.*

Translating Literature into Life

[From the *Bookman* (New York), September 1919, by permission of the George H. Doran Company. The essay has been reprinted, somewhat abridged and with other slight changes, in *Things That Have Interested Me.*]

Arnold Bennett, famous novelist, author of *The Old Wives' Tale,* is also an essayist. Besides a number of little books of "popular philosophy" — *How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day,* and others — he has published some books of short essays and jottings, of which *Books and Persons* is the best.

Mr. Bennett has been called an "apostle of common sense." Does he seem here to be offering "counsels of perfection"? Notice the vigor of the style, and the devices used to impress the reader — the opening parable, the dialogue, the use of short sentences, and so on. Compare his views with those expressed in the next following essay.

Specialists and Dilettanti

[From the *New Republic* (New York), April 13, 1921, by permission of the editors. The translator is Mr. Joel Elias Spingarn.]

In a note, Mr. Spingarn says: "The work of Benedetto Croce, the foremost Italian thinker of our time, now Minister of Education in the cabinet of Giolitti [June 1920–July 1921], is inadequately known in this country. This brief paper will at least dispel the wholly false conception of him as an advocate of impressionism in criticism and dilettantism in thought." Mr. Spingarn, who was formerly professor of comparative literature in Columbia University, is author of many books, including *The New Criticism* and *Creative Criticism,* which are based on theories of Croce.

You may think that the ideas and ideals of the author have little significance for an undergraduate, but that is a mistake. They can be made the ground of a very valuable discussion of the intellectual life in general, and the problems of the student in particular. The essay is based on a contrast of two kinds of learning or education. Notice how well it is outlined. Try to put the main contention in one paragraph.

"THE VULGAR TONGUE"

American Speech

[From *A Glance Toward Shakespeare*, by permission of the author and of the Atlantic Monthly Press.]

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN, one of the foremost American essayists, is author of *Emerson and Other Essays*, *Practical Agitation*, *Learning and Other Essays*, *Memories and Milestones*, *The Greek Genius*, and so forth, all full of wit and wisdom and written with rare independence of spirit. He is also the editor of the *Letters* of his son, Victor Chapman, American ace.

Notice the homely strength of the style and how it suggests the positive but attractive personality of the author. Make this essay and the one next following the basis of a discussion of the nature and value of good spoken English, and of how spoken English affects written English. — Exactly what does "articulate" mean?

Current Speech

[From the *Living Age*, June 5, 1920, by permission of the author and the editors.]

HENRY BESTON SHEAHAN is author of *A Volunteer Poilu*, *Full Speed Ahead*, and *The Firelight Fairy Book*.

Several subjects for discussion or for essays are suggested: The comic supplement; Whether the "anthropoid 'gotchas' and 'getchas'" are veritable reflections of our national speech; The value of Bible reading as affecting speech; and others.

Silver-Tongued Orators

[From *A Shadow on the Dial*, by permission of the publisher, A. M. Robertson, San Francisco.]

AMBROSE BIERCE (1842–1914) was the author of many books of essays and short stories. Among the latter are: *In the Midst of Life*, *Can Such Things Be? Black Beetles in Amber*, and *Fantastic Fables*. A rather forbidding genius, he was master of a style of great power at its best, but at times fantastic or melodramatic. He has written some of the best stories of horror in English.

This amusing attack on "fine writing" may not be as much needed to-day as when it was written; but it puts so well the vice

it ridicules, and, by a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*, shows so clearly the superiority of plain English, that it is well worth pondering. Compare it with a chapter, "On Jargon," in Quiller-Couch's *On the Art of Writing*. Bierce's great quality is vigor. Write an imitation of his style.

On the Vulgar Tongue

[From the *Nation* (London), May 8, 1920, by permission of the editor.]

I HAVE included this essay and the one immediately following for two reasons: because the language of the "folk" is of much greater interest and significance than students as a rule realize; and because the two selections show how interesting simple compilation — in which the author's contribution is little more than collection and arrangement — may be when skillfully done.

The two papers can be made the basis of many interesting and instructive discussions of archaisms, colloquialisms, localisms, and vulgarisms.

Dante wrote a book, *De vulgari eloquio*, which discusses the "mother tongue," that is, Italian. — Sam Weller is in *Pickwick Papers;* Dick Swiveller, in *The Old Curiosity Shop;* and Sairey Gamp, in *Martin Chuzzlewit.*

Curiosities of American Speech

[From *Casual Essays from "The Sun,"* by permission of the editors of *The Sun*, New York.]

The Sun has always been especially noted for its short humorous editorials — really little essays on topics of universal appeal. Some of the best have been gathered in the volume from which this is taken.

If the student has access to the files of the Journals of the American or the English Folk-Lore Society, he can compile a paper of his own, quite as amusing.

A GROUP OF STUDENT ESSAYS

THE papers included here were written as class assignments, and have been printed unaltered from the students' final corrections. They represent work done in high school and in all four years of college. The authors have permitted me to publish them anonymously, because I wished to disguise the sex of the respective writers and to withhold the name of their colleges. I must make an exception of two, however. The remarkable essay, "Green Pastures," was written by Miss Ruth McDuffee, while she was a junior in Simmons College, and shortly before death tragically cut short a career of promise. The charming little description, "October in California," has already been published in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, and was written by Miss M. Agnes Edwards, of the University of California.

The main value of such examples of undergraduate writing lies in their serving as a gauge by which other students can measure their own accomplishment.

A GROUP OF SHORT EDITORIALS

THE editorial essay of from 150 to 600 words may almost be called a separate type, with its own technique. It usually takes some item of news as a point of departure and generalizes from it or discusses it or follows out its suggestions. It must be planned as short, and with a view to rapid reading, and must therefore deal with a simple and salient idea. Since it is intended for popular reading, it must be simple, or even plain, in style and perfectly clear in expression, and must not be afraid of expressing the obvious. The idea chosen must be of universal appeal. The author cannot be afraid of dressing up the commonplace. He may moralize, stimulate, or merely amuse. One of his best subjects is the romance of common things, the "heart interest" of everyday happenings, or, as Dr. Johnson said of poetry, "the reproduction of our common thoughts with an increase of sensibility."

Writing such editorials is excellent elementary practice for the student of composition. When he comes to compare his work with the examples here given, however, he should remember that these were probably written rapidly, under severe pressure, and without opportunity for revision.

The editorials are reprinted by permission of the editors.

PAST AND PRESENT

The Faith of a Humanist

[From *Isis: An International Review Devoted to the History of Science and Civilization* (Brussels, Belgium), January 1920, by permission of the author.]

GEORGE SARTON, who is the editor of *Isis*, is also Associate in the history of science in Harvard University. He is engaged in writing *An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science*, of which the chapters dealing with the progress of science from the ninth century, B.C., to the sixth, A.D., are ready (1921) for publication. To *Isis* he has contributed, besides the present essay, several others of great interest, among them: "Herbert Spencer," "Evariste Galois," "War and Civilization," and "The Teaching of the History of Science." Two sentences from the last essay perhaps sum up the purpose which Mr. Sarton has made his life-work: "The history of science is an encyclopædic discipline. It will stand or fall as we accept or not the possibility of encyclopædic knowledge. I claim that such knowledge is both necessary and possible." There can be no doubt that such a view is of immense significance and value to our times.

"The Faith of a Humanist" is a very beautiful expression of the best scientific creed, and it gains much from the frankly personal manner in which it is written. Be sure you understand the word "humanist," and what is meant by "combining the historical and the scientific spirit."

Athens, Florence, Our World

[I have not been able to discover the date of this excellently written editorial. It is reprinted by permission of the editor of the *Minneapolis Journal*.]

GOETHE'S remark that the main purpose of the study of the past is to help us to understand the present, is full of suggestion for an essayist. What, in one sentence, is the theme?

Ch'Ang-An

[From the *Independent and Weekly Review* (New York), November 19, 1921, by permission of the editors.]

WHAT, in one sentence, is the theme? It has many applications, and could be made the subject of many essays.

Li Po, some of whose poems have been translated into English, is generally regarded as the foremost poet of China.

A Mountain in Thessaly

[From the *Freeman* (New York), January 29, 1921, by permission of the editors. The essay is one of a series, entitled, *The University of the World*.]

An appealing piece of reminiscence by a young man on the theme that the significance of much that we study in school becomes apparent only after we have all but forgotten it.

The Secret of Success

[From the *Times* (London), but reprinted here from *Modern Essays*, edited by J. W. Mackail, LL.D., by permission of Longmans, Green and Company, publishers of the book.]

Modern Essays is a collection of "third leaders" from the *Times* — short editorials on general subjects, of high literary quality, restrained in style, and mature in thought.

I must take space to quote from Professor Mackail's interesting Introduction. Paraphrasing John Wesley's Preface to the *Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*, he gives an excellent summary of the qualities of a good essay-style: "(1) In these essays there is no doggerel; no botches; nothing put in to patch up; no feeble expletives. (2) Here is nothing turgid nor bombast on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. (3) Here are no *cant* expressions; no words without meaning. Those who impute this to us know not what they say. We talk common sense, and use no word but in a fixed determinate sense. (4) Here are, allow me to say, both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language, and at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity."

In the essay, a quotation establishes the theme, and is developed by taking issue with it. Notice, too, that the quotation gives the division of the subject — two kinds of success.

Telephone

[From the *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1914, — since republished in *America at Work*, — by permission of and special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers of the book.]

Joseph Husband, soon after his graduation from Harvard, spent a year as a miner, and recorded his experiences in *A Year in a Coal Mine*. He has also been a sailor (*A Year in the Navy*),

and is now a business man and man of letters. Others of his books are *The Story of a Pullman Car* and *Americans by Adoption.* George Moore, the eminent Irish novelist, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October 1922 gave an amusing account of his meeting with Mr. Husband.

"Telephone" is an example of the descriptive essay. Is the theme ever stated in so many words? Compare this paper with the one that follows as to method, style, and general effectiveness.

A Nocturne of Steel

[From *To-Day* (London), by permission of the editor, Mr. Holbrook Jackson.]

The author has a stupendous subject: would you call his method descriptive, impressionistic, lyrical, or — what? Has he succeeded in conveying his vision and emotion to the reader? Of what value is this kind of writing?

Political Prestidigitation
Public Opinion

[Both from *The Shadow on the Dial,* by permission of the publisher. With "Silver-Tongued Orators" (p. 143), these two essays form Sections II, III, and IV of *The Game of Politics.*]

It is difficult to find good examples of informal political discussion that is not merely local or contemporary. These two specimens of Bierce's hammer-and-tongs manner, however, point morals of permanent application, and will serve to show about how far in journalistic writing one may go in the direction of the forthright and downright. They also illustrate Bierce's essential fire and courage.

Good-Bye, America!

[From *The Nation and The Athenæum* (London), March 4, 1922, by permission of the author and the editors.]

This amusing chant of farewell was much quoted in American newspapers at the time of its publication. It is, however, more than amusing, for it would be hard to pack more information in so little space or to give a more complete impression of national differences. Study the use of the catalogue method of giving details, the use of repetition and refrain, the rhythm of the sentences, and the cyclonic effect of the whole.

My New-Thought Boyhood: an American Adventure

[From the *Hibbert Journal* (London), February 1921, by permission of the author and of the editor, Mr. L. P. Jacks. Slightly abridged.]

An example of how interesting boyhood memories may be if recorded without pretentiousness or sentimentality.

THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH

Tristram Brown: Cobbler

[From *Casual Essays from "The Sun"* (New York), by permission of the editors.]

The Oldest Living Graduate

[From *Casual Essays from "The Sun"* (New York), by permission of the editors.]

THIS famous editorial is almost a classic. With the exception of "Words That Laugh and Cry," in the same volume, it has been perhaps more widely quoted than any other *Sun* editorial. "The Oldest Living Graduate" and "Tristram Brown" are examples of the editorial writer's infallible feeling for sound sentiment, here expressed with intense sympathy, but with humor and restraint.

Tops and Marbles

[From the *Boston Globe*, March 10, 1922, by permission of the editors of the *Globe*.]

THE author, who writes over the signature, "Uncle Dudley," contributes the leading editorial every day, and probably no editorials are more widely read in New England.

The "tenacious conservatism of childhood" here discussed may to some extent account for the conservatism of youth deplored in the following selections.

The Cowardice of Youth

[From the *Times* (London), — reprinted in *Modern Essays*, — by permission of Longmans, Green and Company.]

THE essay, obviously written by one in middle age, puts with unusual bluntness a view which is at least not sentimental. There has been a good deal of foolishness written about the "young" and the "new" in our day, and this editorial makes quite clear the truth that youth is not a matter of years, but of frame of mind.

Youth

[From the *Nation* (New York), November 16, 1921. Published anonymously. Reprinted by permission of the editors.]

THE author was formerly professor of German in Ohio State University, and is now associate editor and dramatic critic of the

Nation. He has written, edited, or translated many books, among them: *The Modern Drama*, *The Drama and the Stage*, *A Book of Modern Criticism*, and *Upstream: An American Chronicle.*

With "Tops and Marbles," "The Cowardice of Youth," and "Student Inactivities," this essay will suggest many subjects for discussion, — perhaps heated, — and for expression in writing. The student will find that many of the contentions of the group were anticipated by Emerson in his essay, "Self-Reliance," which was one of the most influential essays ever written in America. It is interesting to note, also, that a League of Youth is advocated by Sir James Barrie in his already famous Rectorial Address, *Courage*, delivered (1922) at the University of Saint Andrews, Scotland.

Student Inactivities

[From the *Freeman* (New York), by permission of the editors.]

Whether you agree with the sentiments of this editorial or not, do not fail to note how excellently it is written. It is a model of clarity and brevity.

PREFERENCES AND PREJUDICES

The Silent Woman

[From the *New Republic* (New York), April 5, 1919, by permission of the editors.]

ALICE DUER (Mrs. Henry Wise) MILLER has published novels, plays, and books of essays. *Are Women People? The Charm School*, and *Manslaughter* are perhaps the best known.

The essay is more witty than conclusive, but it roused Mr. Hackett to a rather elaborate answer, which follows. Notice the skill with which the imaginary dialogue is conducted.

Loquacious Man: His Answer

[From the *New Republic* (New York), April 5, 1919, by permission of the editors. Signed "F. H."]

THE author is associate editor and literary critic of the *New Republic*, and has published *A Study in Nationalism*, *Horizons*, and *The Invisible Censor*.

These two essays have the interest of informal debate. Some one has said that the essayist is always a special pleader, a dealer in half-truths. From the point of view of rousing the reader to reply, of "causing a reaction," is Mrs. Miller's or Mr. Hackett's the more effective piece of writing? Is the forcible expression of a half-truth legitimate, on the ground that it always elicits a reply? If you are familiar with the essays of Chesterton, and the plays and prefaces of Shaw, and the essays of Mencken, should you say that these men are fond of this method of rousing the reader's protest, or ire? Is it an immoral method?

The Terrors of Talk

[From *To-Day* (London), July 1920, by permission of the editor, Mr. Holbrook Jackson.]

THE REVEREND FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE, Rector of St. Mary's and Canon of St. Munchin's, St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, Ireland, is the author of many volumes of poems, and of some novels and plays.

This is a full-fledged essay, carefully finished. The author arouses interest, first by telling an Irish anecdote, and then by attacking a literary idol. The discussion is an unusually good example of vigor combined with pleasantness.

The Advantage of Not Being Educated

[From the *Bookman* (New York), September 1919; since reprinted in *Well, Why Not?* published by Doubleday, Page, and Company. By permission of the proprietors of the *Bookman* — the George H. Doran Company — and of the author.]

THOMAS L. MASSON has been literary and managing editor of *Life* (New York) since 1893, but has recently retired from that position. He is author or editor of many books, including *A Corner in Women*, *The Von Blumers*, *A Bachelor's Baby*, and *The Best Stories in the World*.

An example of "dry" humor and genial satire. Compare it as to tone with Mr. Lynd's "Cats." The plan of blandly taking an unconventional position and arguing plausibly from it is excellent for many purposes of humor, but requires a light and steady hand. (See, also, Mr. Masson's "How I Trained Myself to Be Disagreeable," p. 226.)

On Wearing a Fur-lined Coat

[From *Pebbles on the Shore*, but first published in the *Star* (London). By permission of the publishers of Mr. Gardiner's essays, E. P. Dutton & Company.]

ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH — that is, the star Alpha in the constellation of the Plough, Dipper, or Great Bear — is the pen-name of Mr. A. G. Gardiner. He is author of many books of essays, among them: *Leaves in the Wind* and *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*.

Alpha calls his essays a "sort of informal diary of moods." They are representative of a large class, which may be said to continue the tradition of Montaigne. Their air is personal, familiar, informal, conversational to the last degree. They are built up mostly by simple association of ideas: idea A suggesting idea B, and that C, and so on. The contrary method is that of plan or outline, in which the entire essay is logically projected through all the steps of "formal exposition." The objection has been raised to the informal style that it is "easy writing," mere musing, day-dreaming, and therefore productive of laxity of mind in both author and reader. But such criticism is rather solemn. Truths may be sought, or merely caught by the way; and the ease of a richly stocked and active mind may chance on wisdom as often as the industry of a mind less wealthy. We do not expect in a familiar essay a closely reasoned and documented exposition; we do expect wit, sentiment, whim, sudden sallies, humor, and incidental information.

The typical subject of such writing is a common, even trivial, object or occurrence, in which the author finds new suggestions. Flaubert says that the novelist should look so long and so hard at a tree that he sees something in it that nobody else has seen — or words to that effect; and this is precisely what the familiar essayist tries to do.

On Going to Bed

[From the *Evening Post* (New York); republished in *Pipefuls*. By permission of the author.]

Christopher Darlington Morley is a member of the editorial staff of the *Evening Post*, and conductor of a "column" nationally known. He is an unusually skillful writer of light verse and informal essays. Some of his books are: *Parnassus on Wheels*, *Songs for a Little House*, *Mince Pie*, *Tales from a Rolltop Desk*, and *Chimney Smoke*. He has also edited *Modern Essays*, an anthology of contemporary essays.

"On Going to Bed" is a good example of what a writer can find to say about the most universal of experiences by merely putting down, not what he has read or what other people have said about it but his own thoughts and feelings, as entertainingly as he can. "Diversity is the order of nature," but so also is similarity; and if a writer records his "diversity," he is almost certain to find that it is also many other people's diversity — hence a likeness and bond of sympathy. The danger is, of course, the indulgence of mere whim and irrational prejudice, which may not arouse echoes in other minds. — *The Moon and Sixpence* is a novel by Somerset Maugham.

On Dropping Anchor

[From *This, That, and the Other*, by permission of the author and of his publishers, Methuen and Company, London.]

The author is considered by some critics to be the greatest living essayist. He has written novels and historical works, but is perhaps best known in this country as a poet and through his little books of essays: *On Nothing*, *On Everything*, *On Anything*, and others. No one can write a better nature-essay.

Mr. Belloc's style is a profitable study. It seems to have been formed on the finest of old books, notably the Bible. It is rugged, full of sap, infused with high animal spirits, eminently rhythmical and simple. It "looks easy" to imitate, but only Max Beerbohm can really imitate it. (See the parody of Belloc in Mr. Beerbohm's *A Christmas Garland*.)

A GROUP OF BOOK REVIEWS

THESE reviews are all reprinted from a department in the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "The Atlantic's Bookshelf" — notices of a few of the best books appearing each month. The reviews are limited to five hundred words each. They are included here in order to provide some specimens of carefully written *short* criticisms.

The writing of such reviews is admirable practice in thoughtful reading, balanced judgment, and condensed writing, and a study of the examples will prove instructive. Some of the questions that arise are: Should the reviewer have the author or the reader most in mind? Should he give space to a summary of the book, and if so, how much? Should he write personally or impersonally? Just what is the purpose of such short reviews?

The student will find much of interest in Mr. Henry Seidel Canby's *Definitions*. Mr. Canby is editor of the *Literary Review*, New York, and his book deals with many problems of criticism and reviewing.

You can learn much about the technique of reviewing from the examples given, but you should supplement your impressions by examining several reviews of a book which you have read.

The reviewers: Mr. Greenough is professor of English and dean of the college in Harvard University; Miss Converse is a well-known author, especially of books for children (her *Long Will* is in Everyman's Library), and is a member of the editorial staff of the *Atlantic Monthly;* Miss Cather is one of the foremost American novelists; Mr. Pier is assistant editor of the *Youth's Companion*, and author of many favorite books for boys; Mr. Pearson is professor of English and History in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Mr. Hale is a noted journalist and critic, at present on the staff of the *Boston Herald;* Mr. Boas is head of the English department, Central High School, Springfield, Massachusetts; Mr. Powers is on the staff of the *Boston Globe;* Mr. Bradford is one of the foremost American biographers.

CHOOSING ESSAY SUBJECTS

CHOOSING ESSAY SUBJECTS

If, as you turn the leaves of this book, you will ask yourself how the various authors came to write on their several topics, you will soon discover that most of the essays were suggested by something quite definite, which is usually mentioned or quoted at the beginning. Something seen, heard, or read serves as a form of text: an item of the day's news, as in "The Shrinkage of Earth" and "The Snow Men"; a book, as in "The Immortal White Whale" and "Sea Stories"; an experience, remembered, as in "Thin Ice" or imagined, as in "A Daydream"; a subject of popular discussion, as in "Actors and Applause"; or a conversation, as in "Book Hunger." There is almost no end to the possible suggestions that may come to the writer from books, conversation, or personal observation.

It may be, however, that in some instances the subject occurred as a vague generality, which was crystallized by a lucky remark, quotation, or incident. One may suppose, for example, that "Translating Literature into Life" first came into Mr. Bennett's mind as a moral idea, rather than as a parable or even a piece of advice; and that it took its present form in response to questions from correspondents; and it is hard to tell whether "The Secret of Success" was elicited by the Roosevelt quotation, or suggested it. It is safe to say that the beginner in essay-writing will, in the majority of cases, think of the particular instance first, — be set going by it, — and will generalize from it.

The initial suggestion need not always be a particular instance. The other night I came, in an old novel, upon the sentence: "He whom the world calls a good fellow is seldom a wise man." This is a general statement, but it

would make an excellent text for an essay. In the older day, the finest essays were often the outgrowth of pondering upon an abstraction. Some of Hazlitt's titles are: "On the Love of Life," "On Religious Hypocrisy," "On Different Sorts of Fame," "On Manner," "On Good Nature," and "On the Tendency of Sects"; and it is unnecessary to mention titles of the same kind in Bacon and Emerson. It used to be the custom to set such subjects for student themes; but nowadays they are — perhaps unfortunately — wholly out of fashion. I say unfortunately, because it would do no student harm occasionally to grapple with a subject requiring abstract thinking.

As the older men seem to have made, rather than found, subjects by meditating upon a phrase or an idea, the modern essayist seems more often to make, rather than find, a subject by contemplating an object. This is the method recommended by Mr. Chesterton in the preface to *Tremendous Trifles*, and it is almost identical with that recommended by Flaubert to the novelist. Mr. Chesterton exhorts us to exercise our eyes, to become "ocular athletes," by which he means, cultivate our imaginative vision. Why need we be so lazy? he asks. Let us stir ourselves to see the truths that lie all about us. Let us write essays about anything, everything — a cat, a cloud, a painted fence. And he ends by declaring that anybody can write essays by merely cultivating the habit of looking below the surface of things, of the commonest objects.

It is surprising how rapidly this faculty of imaginative vision can be cultivated. Try it. Try looking thoughtfully at the most familiar thing for ten minutes, asking yourself what it suggests that you have never read, seen, or heard of before. Contemplate an inkwell, a loaf of bread, a baseball bat, a sparrow, a tree, your hand or foot, trying to see it freshly and personally. It is an immensely valuable intellectual exercise. A washtub, for instance, might

call up memories of washday at home, contrasts with the electric washing-machine, the necessity of drudgery in the work of the world, the smell of soap as affecting associative memory, wild washerwomen you have known, a Chinese laundryman, your own attempts to "do the family wash," washing the family dog — these are a few of the possible suggestions. And among them there is likely to be one that is so full of humor, sentiment, fact, fancy, or opinion, that you can make it the subject of what Addison calls "simple but not obvious" writing.

A List of Essay Subjects

The value of the following extensive list of titles is mainly suggestive. In using it, you should ask regarding each subject whether it brings into your mind any body of thought, opinion, fact, experience, or fancy sufficiently full and novel to be of interest to a reader, remembering that readableness is always in direct proportion to the stimulation you can exercise, whether of novelty, or sound sense, or humor, or what not. Many of the titles were suggested by the essays that precede, and a perusal of the essays themselves will in some instances increase the body of suggestion. Often a title that suggests very little will, after ten minutes' thought, arouse a wealth of ideas.

Other extensive lists are given in Tanner's *Essays and Essay-Writing*, Curl's *Expository Writing*, and Thomas's *The Teaching of English in the Secondary School.*

The subjects are classified for convenience, but many of those listed in one division might with equal propriety be listed in another. A novel feature of the list is that the subjects in the successive sections were in many instances suggested by the essays in the successive divisions of the book. This arrangement was adopted in the hope that the student, when he has selected a subject, may obtain from the appropriate essays hints on how to handle it.

Earth and Sea

1. "Up with Me, into the Clouds"
2. Cape to Cairo
3. Moon Mountains African
4. "Fly Country"
5. Speed!
6. "Civilized Woman's Appalling Cruelty"
7. "Comes the New Age"
8. Why Climb Mountains?
9. The Hairy Men of the Himalayas: A Fantasy
10. The Best Sea Story in the World
11. Yarns
12. Sailors Ashore
13. *Mal de Mer*
14. 'Long-Shore Life
15. Nautical Terms
16. There She Blows!
17. Captain Ahab
18. Beginning a Sentence with "O"
19. Sea Monsters
20. A Conversation with a Sparrow
21. The Song of the Cricket
22. The English Sparrow
23. A Bird "Genius"
24. Birding with a Camera
25. A Summer Hotel
26. Up with the Sun
27. The Autobiography of a Grasshopper
28. If I Were a Bee
29. On Being a Squirrel for a Day
30. Catching Frogs
31. Marvels of Instinct
32. The Song of the Skates
33. A Hard Frost
34. The Blizzard
35. The Lake
36. Trout and Bass
37. Snow Crystals
38. A Caged Tiger
39. Cat and Dog: A Conversation
40. Goldfish
41. The Most Stupid Animal
42. A Dog's Life
43. Boy and Dog
44. Vacant-Lot Vegetation
45. Leaves of Grass

46. Vegetable Tramps
47. Winged Seeds
48. Sumach and Sassafras

Art and Life

49. *Poetas* and *Vates*
50. On Writing Verse
51. On Not Writing Verse
52. "Blest Visions"
53. "Young Men Shall See Visions, and Old Men Dream Dreams"
54. "The Everlasting Pipe and Flute"
55. "Lips . . . in Wood and Stone and Clay"
56. Poetry as Religion
57. Poets as Bell-Ringers
58. Another Daydream
59. In Church
60. The Organist
61. Do Dreams Come True?
62. The Church as a Symbol
63. Closed Doors
64. Scotch Melodies
65. Jazz
66. Popular Songs
67. A Music Festival
68. A Symphony Concert
69. On Hearing Fritz Kreisler
70. On Hearing Galli-Curci
71. Nursery Melodies
72. The Dangers of Uplift
73. The Terrors of the Phonograph
74. Canned Melody
75. On Acting
76. A Matinée Idol
77. My First Play
78. My Worst Play
79. An Amateur Rehearsal
80. Drama *versus* Film
81. A Movie Fan
82. Of Encores
83. Illusion and Delusion
84. The Joys of Melodrama
85. The Town Hall
86. Barn Stormers
87. The Actor Folk in Nicholas Nickleby and Huckleberry Finn
88. The Æsthetics of Sport
89. The Ethics of Sport

90. "Form" in Athletics
91. "The Minor Arts"
92. The Fine Art of Living
93. On Seeing Ty Cobb
94. Hamlet Considered as a Moving Picture
95. The Trouble with the "Movie"
96. Our Preposterous Movies
97. The Moving Picture of the Future
98. Film "Comedy"
99. Loving Pictures and Loving Art
100. Seen in a Picture Gallery
101. Music Hunger
102. Short-Ration Days
103. The One Book for a Desert Island
104. Creative Reading
105. Reading between the Lines
106. Roughing It
107. Wherein the Fortunate Soldier Was Fortunate
108. "Book Taught"
109. Reading for Pleasure
110. Intellectual Sloth
111. On Meeting a Real Author
112. Commonplace Books
113. Authors One Would Wish to Meet
114. Adventures in Reading
115. Reading as a Sport
116. Cultivating One's Engine Power
117. Specialization *versus* Culture
118. A Portrait of a Specialist
119. A Portrait of a Dilettante
120. Predigested Culture
121. Royal Roads to Learning
122. Types of the Superficial
123. "Closed Circles" in College
124. Doorkeepers
125. "Volatile and Divided Brains"
126. On Being Original

"The Vulgar Tongue"

127. Voice and Brain
128. Gargling One's Mother Tongue
129. American English
130. Heard on the Street
131. Speech as a Mark of Character
132. "Where True Education Should Begin"
133. Shakespeare as a "Traveling University"

134. The "Comic Supplement"
135. The Newspaper "Strip"
136. The Sunday Edition
137. Bible-Reading at Home
138. Fourth of July Orations
139. "Silver-Tongued Men"
140. The Decay of Eloquence
141. Shopworn English
142. Home Town Words
143. The Beauty of Scots
144. Folk Poetry in Words
145. The Tyranny of the Dictionary
146. The Joy of Being Ungrammatical
147. The English of Mr. Weller and Mrs. Gamp
148. "Lost Beauties of the English Tongue"
149. The Beauties of Slang
150. Slanguage
151. Slang as Poetry
152. Negro Words
153. Schoolmarm English
154. Feminisms
155. Shop Talk
156. Idiom in Proverbs

Past and Present

157. I'd Like to Have Lived Then
158. I'd Like to Live There
159. "Immaterial Things"
160. The Sense of the Past
161. Human, Humane, Humanistic, Humanitarian
162. "The Whole of Humanity . . . but One Man"
163. The Spirit of the Mediæval Craftsman
164. If the Greek Gods Came to America
165. "The Dog's-Eared Virgil"
166. *Amo, Amas, Amat*
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168. A Chinese Vase
169. Ceremonial Robes of Old Japan
170. East is East and West is West
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173. An Infinite Capacity for Taking Pains
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175. The Art of Telephoning
176. Pittsburgh at Night
177. New York, from the Bridge

178. The Song of the Wires
179. In a Shipyard
180. On a Signal Tower
181. The Blast Furnace
182. Road Making
183. My Friend the Switchman
184. Election Night
185. Town Meeting
186. Casting One's First Vote
187. How to Know Whom to Vote for
188. Things I Don't Know about Politics
189. A Public Servant
190. Statesman or Politician
191. The Average Man: A Defense
192. Is the Minority Always Right?
193. Political Promises
194. Political Prejudices
195. Department-Store Civilization
196. A Child in Church
197. Prayer Meeting
198. The Christmas Entertainment
199. A Faith Healer
200. Types in Town
201. Church Rivalries
202. Main Street
203. Pastor or Preacher

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207. Good-bye to the Country
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221. The Pleasure Class

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263. "Gas"

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278. A Freshman Advises a Senior
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295. The Agreeable Pessimist
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